School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1405200

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2021 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/motherhoodofgods0000bank

BX
8333
B3
M6

THE Motherhood of God

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

By

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF

"CHRIST AND HIS FRIENDS," "THE HEAVENLY TRADE-WINDS,"
"THE LORD'S ARROWS," ETC.

53-384 L6

CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & PYE
NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS

COPYRIGHT, 1901, BY
THE WESTERN METH-
ODIST BOOK CONCERN

Contents

		Page.
I.	The Motherhood of God,	9
II.	Christ's "Do n't Worry Club,"	17
III.	The Best Wealth Open for All,	25
IV.	The Palmistry of the Saints,	35
V.	The Recognition of Friends in Heaven,	44
VI.	The Recognition of Friends on Earth,	52
VII.	Mutual Dependence of Humanity,	60
VIII.	The Beauty and Glory of Helpfulness,	67
IX.	A Reasonable Religion,	77
X.	The Perils of Egotism,	86
XI.	The Harness of Life,	96
XII.	The Strands of Heaven's Cable,	107
XIII.	The Face of Jesus Christ,	116
XIV.	The Mirage of To-morrow,	124
XV.	The "God-speeds" and Welcomes of Life,	132
XVI.	The Romance of Christianity,	140
XVII.	Meshullam, the Boarding-house Roomer who Did his Duty,	149
XVIII.	The High-noon of Human Life,	159

333179

PAGE.

XIX. THE COIN THAT RINGS TRUE, ... 167

XX. THE THREE GREATEST SIGNAL-LIGHTS IN HISTORY, ... 175

XXI. LAYING HOLD OF THE LIFE-LINE, ... 184

XXII. THE PERSONAL VISION OF CHRIST, . . . 193

XXIII. MY NEIGHBOR'S DUTY AND MY OWN, . . 202

XXIV. THE KING'S JEWELS, ... 210

XXV. THE CONQUEST OF OUR FAULTS, ... 219

XXVI. RENEWING THE YOUTH OF THE SOUL, . . 228

XXVII. THE TUG AT THE OARS, ... 238

The Motherhood of God

I

The Motherhood of God

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."—ISAIAH LXVI, 13.

GOD could come no nearer to us than that. To compare himself to a mother dandling her child upon her knee, soothing it in time of sorrow, rejoicing it with the consciousness of her love, is the very brightest illustration of gracious tenderness to which we are susceptible. And that tender illustration may be taken home to every heart that turns to the Lord with loving obedience. The only aristocracy of heaven is the aristocracy of the family. Let us study God's motherhood for a few moments.

We have, first, a suggestion in it of our individuality. A mother individualizes her children. I have seen in a family twins so near alike in the color of the hair and eyes, in the formation of the features, and in every way, that no stranger could tell them apart, and sometimes even brothers and sisters were unable to distinguish them at first glance. But the mother knew the difference. They were distinct and individual to her. There may be a large family, but not one is lost in the crowd to the mother's thoughtful tenderness. Each one has his or her separate

place in that warm heart. So it is that God thinks of us; Christ assures us that we are never lost in the multitude so that God does not think about us personally. He emphasizes this individual thoughtfulness of God by the declaration that even the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and says that though we might be so small and humble as to be compared to an odd sparrow that is thrown in with the job lot on the market-man's table, still we are not forgotten by our Heavenly Father.

Surely the world seems like a different place when one gets to know and feel that this is true. It is no longer so lonely, for it is God's world, and he is our Father. A great many people who believe in God in a way, believe only in his head of wisdom and his arm of power. They have not grasped the thought of his tenderness of feeling and gentleness of care. They see God in the great storm that devastates the forest and destroys ships on the sea; they can see God in mighty movements of nations and civilizations; they can see him in the tendency of the ages; but the conception of the Divine heart, of the God who cares for his children one by one, has not yet possessed them.

One of the most successful Indian missions ever established in this country is in British Columbia, at Metlahkatla. It was established by a Mr. Duncan, who went into that region among these Indians to begin his work in 1857. But he did not know the language, and concluded that he would not undertake to preach at all until he had learned it. So he devoted all his powers and all his time for eight

months to studying the language of these people he wanted to win to Christ. The Indians were greatly puzzled as to what he wanted. They thought there must be something more than simply a white man's curiosity in this determination to acquire the art of speaking the miserable jargon in which they talked. But though he did not preach by the spoken word, his just and kind and gentle Christian conduct was preaching all the time. Finally, the curiosity among the Indians became so great that the head chief went to Mr. Duncan one day and asked him, "Have you a letter from God?" "Well, yes," said Mr. Duncan, "I have God's Word." "Have you come to tell us God's heart?" "Yes," said Duncan. And thus it was that God opened the hearts of those people to hear the message from his own heart which has transformed them from heathen savages to happy, intelligent Christian men and women.

It is with the same purpose that I come to you with this message. My text is a message from God's heart. "As one whom his mother comforteth," so God seeks to comfort you. What a wealth of overflowing love the figure suggests! Mark Guy Pearse says that in all his dealings with us God delights to bless us overflowingly. He is never stingy with us. He who is love can not be content with giving us bread and clothes and light and air. As a mother fitting up the child to go away on a journey, puts in a great many things not absolutely necessary, but just overflowing prodigality for her child, so God puts a thousand things into this world that are not merely necessary, but are the glad indulgence of his

love for us. The stars must look down heaven's kindliness upon us. The flowers must brighten us with their beauty, and sweeten the earth with fragrance. The birds must bring their song. Our necessities, measured and exact, can never satisfy our God. He must give us music, and laughter, and the joy of little children, and the brightness of home and friendship. Man can not live by bread alone—either given or received. Love that reads in little common things a wealth that is more than golden, a glory that surpasses art, a meaning that is deeper than words—this is what love asks and what love gives.

Look at the mother's love for her little baby. If one had no appreciation of it by any human sympathy, or touch of fellowship, how absurd it would be! How utterly unmeaning! What waste of precious time! What waste of energy to be chirping nonsense to a little child who can not understand a word of it! But mother-love understands it, feasts on it. And so God pours out his love upon us, his children. He loves us even when we have gone astray into sin, and seeks to love us back again into his heart and home.

And as the mother individualizes in her love for her children, does not love them all just alike—that is, just in the same way—but loves each one in his own way, so the child individualizes too, and the phrase "My mother" is vastly different from the term "A mother." There is something that separates her from all the other mothers in the world, and there is a sense of luxury of love and restfulness of faith in the thought of "my own mother."

After one of the hard-fought battles of the Civil War, a Confederate chaplain was called hastily to see a dying soldier. Taking his hand, he said:

"Well, my brother, what can I do for you?"

He supposed that, as was frequently the case when he was called on such errands, the young fellow was wanting him to plead with God for help in his extremity; but it was not so.

"Chaplain," said he, "I want you to cut a lock of hair for my mother; and then, chaplain, I want you to kneel down and return thanks to God for me."

"For what?" asked the chaplain.

"For giving me such a mother. O, she is a good mother! Her teachings are my comfort now. And then, chaplain, thank God that through her loving influence and teachings, and by his grace, I am a Christian, and am able to look up into his face and say, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' What would I do now if I were not a Christian? And thank him for giving me dying grace. He makes this hard bed feel 'soft as downy pillows are.' And, O chaplain, thank him for the promised home in glory—I 'll soon be there to wait for and to welcome mother."

And so the chaplain knelt by the side of that soldier's death-cot, not to utter a word of petition or pleading to God, but only to voice the praise and thanksgiving of a dying boy for a good mother, a Christian hope, dying grace, and an eternal home in heaven.

And as our own mother seems different to us from any one else, so when we get into our hearts this thought of God as One who loves us personally,

and our hearts respond to it in obedience and gratitude, our thought of God is transformed, and in our heart of hearts we say tenderly, "My God," as with tearful love and gratitude a child would say of the tenderest mother, "My mother."

We have in this figure, which God has used to make himself known to us, a suggestion of the sacrificial love which caused him to come to our rescue when we were poor sinners. There is no other illustration that can come so near adequately picturing that compassion and love which is revealed in the statement of Jesus that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The man who does not believe in vicarious atonement surely has not seen much of family life, and does not know much about how mothers give themselves for their children. Who has not known of some case where the father's heart has hardened against the son who has shamed him and disgraced him, so that he was not willing to see him again or to acknowledge him; but no matter who is against him, so long as he is above ground the wayward boy, marred and scarred by sin though he be, knows there is one place that is warm toward him, and that is his mother's heart. And how like the mother's heart is the tenderness of God that sought after us in our sins, and continues to seek after us now, though we have wandered far away by wicked deeds.

It is hard to see how men can sin against God's tenderness. We can understand how power might

fail to win, how a man might grit his teeth in the presence of fear and refuse to move; but how a man can face the motherhood of God, the kindness of his love in Jesus Christ, the tenderness of that long-suffering patience that has followed him through all the years—that is hard to understand.

We have suggested also in this figure the perfect restfulness of faith and confidence that may come to the soul which has this tender conception of God. Stephen must have had some thought like this about the Lord when amid the agony of his martyrdom he smiled with confidence and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." If the child has anything it wants to keep, something that is very precious, and it wants to be sure that its right will be defended against all comers, it is turned over to mother. Mothers are great treasure-keepers for their children. So if we will give our hearts to God in grateful obedience we may trust all to him with that supreme confidence of childhood. We know that he will keep it safe. He has the strength, he has the wisdom, and he has the love to keep forever what we commit to his hands.

This is a personal theme for every one of us. It is as if there were no God at all unless he is your own God. Some of you have been going on living with a vague and indifferent idea about God, and Christ, and heaven, and the immortal life. I call you to something infinitely more precious than that. Here is the God—the personal God, who loves you, who has followed after you in your indifference, and who bends over you with the tenderness of a mother's heart in your loneliness and in your sorrow, and

cries out to you with a tenderness of pleading beyond description or illustration, "As a mother comforteth her child, so will I comfort you." Are you lonely? Here is a chance to creep into the motherly arms of God and find peace. Are you sorrowful? You may come and put your head upon his breast and weep there and find infinite comfort. Are you sinful? Then there is a heart throbbing with infinite compassion and pity and love. Come, pillow your head here, and find forgiveness.

II

Christ's "Do n't Worry Club"

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—MATTHEW VI, 34.

THERE have been organized in New York City and in some other parts of the country what are known as "Do n't Worry clubs." But these are by no means original. Christ organized the first Do n't Worry club, when he gathered his circle of friends and disciples together, and began to teach them his own trustful spirit. One of the marvelous things about Jesus Christ is that he was never under any circumstances fretful, or peevish, or worried. The story of his life is very comprehensively told by four biographers, who had a great deal of interest in personal detail where it affected his character in any way; but there is not a single place that even suggests such a thing as Christ giving way to worry. There can be no doubt that he expects his disciples to follow his example in this very important matter, and the Christian Church, wherever organized, is a Do n't Worry club. If its members fail to live up to that ideal they fail of the noblest and best Christian influence.

I wish to speak specially at this time about worry-

ing concerning the future. The text does not mean carelessness or recklessness about the future; but it is a caution against anxiety. We are to take no thought for the morrow which will in any way burden and dishearten us in the work of to-day. Worry is a very painful experience, and God made us to be happy. I grow more sure of that as I grow older. In spite of all the disappointments and defeats and hurts of life, I become surer every day that the keynote of human life is happiness, and that we have no right to give ourselves over to be the bond slaves of painful worry and anxiety. There is perhaps no bad habit that grows more rapidly in power than a habit of worrying and foreboding evil for the future. Worry develops in us the brooding spirit, and Paul says that such people become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened, so that it does not perceive things clearly or in their true relation.

Dr. George H. Hepworth comments aptly on the fact that one may brood over a very little matter until what was only an ant-hill swells to the size of a mountain. Dwelling upon a present annoyance, or unduly upon a threatened trouble, you magnify it, so that it assumes proportions which do not rightly belong to it. Your logical faculty is set aside, is banished to the background; you are no longer a reasoning being, but one who imagines facts, and then acts as though they were real. This is a dangerous thing to do, because you erect a false standard of measurement, and your life gets to be all out of joint. The friendship which has been very dear

to you dwindles until it becomes a mere suspicion, and suspicion is no basis on which to build any sweet or lasting relationship.

One may brood over a physical ailment until all the forces of nature sweep in that direction, and it becomes far more serious than it would otherwise have been. Christian Science, so-called, mental healing, and all such kindred fads have deceived so many people because they have at the starting-point a certain vein of truth, though it is lost in the fancies and errors gathered about them. But it remains true that one may think of a pain until it doubles its force and becomes almost unbearable, whereas in point of fact it is not at all serious; or any one may ignore many small ills until they are forgotten.

A man may nurse an injury, or a supposed injury, until it grows to be the one overwhelming thing in his experience, dominating his whole being and setting his worst passions in motion; or he can curb his imagination, allow reason to come to the front, and reach the conclusion nine times out of ten that after all it is an insignificant affair, not worth any particular notice.

Worrying about the future is especially a folly, because it is proverbial that it is the unexpected that happens. No man can have the forces of life so well in hand that he can take the disposing of them out of the hands of God. If you watch the afternoon sky you will see that the Divine Artist can paint a thousand cloud-pictures in one afternoon, and dissolve them all at last, and let the sun go down in a cloudless sky. So God can deal with human life by our

aid; but we may reverently say, what is certainly true, that even God can not banish the clouds from our sky unless we are willing.

One of the sad things about this worrying habit is, that it is contagious. There are some diseases which a man may have, and though his being sick may annoy his friends, they are in no danger of catching the sickness from him; but there are other diseases so contagious that the victim not only suffers himself, but brings everybody who comes near him into danger. The man who worries has that kind of disease. He breeds anxiety in other people. His anxious face, his depressed spirits, his cynical attitude toward life, his despairing, hopeless outlook on the future communicates itself to some extent to others, to their great sorrow. It is a serious thing to have that kind of an effect on people.

Major Waddell has been traveling in the Himalayas, and tells an interesting story of the leeches that he met with in the damp forest of the Teesta Valley. When a leech is famishing he is only about as thick as a knitting-needle. In that condition he is the hungry enemy of every two- or four-footed creature that crosses his path. In this valley the leeches were everywhere. They stood alert on every twig of the brushwood that overhung the track of the travelers, and on every dead leaf on the path. And as the explorers drew near the creatures lashed themselves vigorously to and fro in a wild endeavor to seize hold of them. The instant they touch their victim they fix themselves firmly, and then mount nimbly up by a series of rapid somersaults till they

reach a vulnerable point; and then they lose not an instant in beginning their surgical operations. The servants in Major Waddell's company, who walked barefooted, had little streams of blood trickling down from their ankles all day long, and at every few steps they had to stop and pick off these horrid little pests, and it was often difficult to dislodge them.

The influence of a man who has the worrying habit bad is like that. Spiritual leeches wriggle in his conversation, stand up and swing to and fro from his countenance, and seize with hungry, leech-like avidity upon every unfortunate friend or acquaintance who comes near enough to be bitten. Not only for our own sakes, but for the sake of the people we love, for the sake of our influence on others, we ought to dodge the worrying habit as we would the plague.

Worrying about the future not only unfits us to meet the duties of to-morrow, but it unfits us for the work of to-day. To-day is the time about which we ought to take most thought. And we all know there is no need of being anxious about to-day. One of the best characterizations Henry Ward Beecher ever made was this: "The past belongs to gratitude and regret; the present to contentment and work; the future to hope and trust." And that surely is the Christian's attitude. The time and place for earnest thought and action on our part is the living present. "To-day is the day of salvation" in everything important concerning us.

Fritter away to-day, or brood it away in foolish anxiety about to-morrow, and to-morrow is already doomed to failure. But do your duty to-day, and

to-day's faithfulness will stand sponsor for to-morrow's success. I was interested recently, looking out from my study window, to watch some men working on the iron frame of a new business block. They were fastening the frame together with large rivets. On one floor a man had a fire, and in this he was heating the rivets red-hot, and every minute or so he tossed one of these heated rivets through the air, and a man standing on the floor above him caught it in a tin can, and another man took it with a pair of pincers, and while it was still red as flame drove it into its place and flattened a head on the soft iron on the other side. I said to myself, Life is like that; to make things hold you must drive the red-hot rivets of to-day's duty into their place. Opportunities will not keep hot over into to-morrow. No hammer will beat the point of a cold rivet into a shape that will hold. And to do your duty to-day as it ought to be done, you must stop worrying about to-morrow.

Christ's Do n't Worry club is founded on the great fact that God cares for us, knows what we need, means that if we do our duty we shall have it, and if we trust him we have a right to look on the sunshiny side of life. There is always a bright side to life, and it is wonderful how quick you can find it when you really start out to seek it. This is vastly important from the fact that the best growths of the human heart demand the sunshine of good cheer and hope in order to come to their best.

A man once planted two rose-trees, one on either side of his house. The trees were equally strong and healthy; but after a time the one grew and pros-

pered, and the other withered and died. Then the man discovered that the living rose-tree was on the sunny side of the house. The best manhood and womanhood can only be developed in the sunshine of Christian faith and hope. Rest assured that the best things in your life will be stunted and dwarfed forever if you give yourself over to anxiety and worry. The best things in the human heart can not live and prosper without cheerfulness. A little child was often observed playing by itself, and laughing and singing with delight. They asked the child what it was playing with, and the little one answered, "I am playing with the sunbeams." It would be better for some of us to quit dabbling with the clouds, and learn how to play with the sunbeams instead.

Christ gives another great reason for not worrying in that concluding sentence, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." That is, there is no necessity for us to carry any burdens which do not belong to to-day. One of the rules of Christ's Do n't Worry club is, that we shall set this sunset limit to the carrying of each day's burdens. Any of us can get through, by God's help and by aid of the friendship and sympathy of our loved ones, with the cares of to-day, and we have no right to load ourselves up with to-morrow until it comes.

John Newton used to compare the trials and troubles which come to one in the course of a year to a bundle of fagots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole at once. He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are to carry to-day, and

then another, which we are to carry to-morrow, and so on. Any of us are strong enough with the Divine help to go bravely through if we live in that spirit. Let us heed the message of the poet:

"Be master of the clouds,
Let them not master thee;
Compel the sunshine to thy soul,
However rough the sea.

Be not as those who own
Nor hope nor glow of faith;
Beyond the clouds the light remains
And true life conquers death.

Be thou of good cheer yet,
Though dark and drear the way;
The longest night wears on to dawn,
And dawn to perfect day.

Possess thy soul in calm,
Let patience rule thy heart,
And in gray shades of clouded times
Bear thou the hero's part.

Then shalt thou know the flush
Of happy, radiant days:
For he who trusts God in the dark
Is taught new songs of praise."

III

The Best Wealth Open for All

"And is not rich toward God."—LUKE XII, 21.

THIS is the conclusion of the story of a man whom God judged to be a fool. He was a very prosperous man in his own time and way. He was a good farmer, raised great crops, and gave his whole attention to the acquiring of riches. He had such remarkable success that his greatest trouble was the embarrassment of riches. Some farmers are troubled to find enough to put in their barns, but his chief perplexity was to keep the barns up to the increase in his crops. The Lord did not call this man a fool because he had a good farm, or because he was careful in taking care of his crops, but because he seemed to regard this as the chief end of his life, and imagined that a barn full of oats and hay and a crib full of corn were sufficient to make a man happy.

God did not call him a fool for laying up riches for himself; but his folly consisted in the fact that on the heavenward side of his nature he was a pauper. He had stored up an abundance for this world, but nothing for the next. He had piled up goods to feed the body, but he was not rich toward God. To be rich toward God is to be rich in one's

inner self, to have wealth which does not depend on the body or the present life or the present world.

If a man had a chance to pick up diamonds, and instead he filled his pockets with marbles, you would all agree he was a fool; but here is a man who has a chance to enrich himself in his character, in his real self, with the deep joy and happiness which come from goodness and from appreciation of Divine things, that clothe the spirit with love, hope, and faith, that endure forever; and instead of treasuring up these diamonds that will shine and brighten through all eternity, he devotes himself exclusively to the temporary affairs of the present life in a body which can at best last but a little while. The world, looking on, calls him rich, because he has abundance of physical goods; but God, looking down upon his great blunder, calls him a fool.

Now, the thought I wish to lay special emphasis on is that the best wealth, that which is most enduring, that which we can keep as a permanent investment and draw interest on under all circumstances, is open for everybody on the same terms. Nobody has a corner on it, and no trust or syndicate or promoter can ever get exclusive control of it so as to shut out the poorest of God's children.

One important element of this wealth is a contented mind. If a man has made up his mind to do his best and leave the result to God, so that he goes along about his work with confidence that all things work together for good to them that love God, and therefore has a right to plead God's promise, then he is a rich man in the truest sense. He

may succeed largely in his business, or he may have a very small measure of riches, but he will have all the revenue that comes from riches as he goes along. If riches signify anything, they signify ease and comfort and happiness. The people who are longing to get wealth in this world want it because they think it will give them ease and comfort and happiness. The contented man or woman has these as he or she goes along in the struggle of life.

The story is told of Pyrrhus, an ancient king, that, elated by victory, he was detailing to Cineas, his prime minister, all his projected triumphs. "I will conquer Sicily."

"What then?"

"Then I will make myself master of Spain."

"And what then?"

"Why, then," said the monarch, "we can take our ease and be happy."

"And why," replied Cineas, "can not we do that now?"

And the monarch was silenced at the question of his prime minister. A contented spirit draws happiness out of the simple things of life, and thus enjoys the revenue of wealth; but no matter how much prosperity a man has, if he is not rich in this spirit of contentment, he is poor, even in the midst of his successes.

One of the most fabulously wealthy men who lived in New York some years ago, a man worth a great many millions of dollars, used to be heard by his servants as he tossed, night after night, on his bed: "O God! I wonder when it will be morning!"

He could have commanded, the next day, twenty millions of dollars; but he was a pauper in spirit. He was a poor, miserable snag of humanity, with the eyes and feelings of a hawk, forever pouncing on what promised to yield back money to his claws, and up to the very last he was sagacious and shrewd and cunning about money; but he was a poverty-stricken wretch in all that peace and comfort and happiness which money is supposed to bring. He loved nobody, and nobody loved him; and he went about gritting his teeth when he remembered how his heirs were cursing and swearing because he lived so long. His heart was a perfect desert, utterly barren of everything that was comfortable or luxurious or delightful. No wonder God calls such a man a fool. But a man does not need to have twenty millions of dollars in order to be a fool. You and I see men every day who are willing to be fools for less money.

I saw a man the other day in a hotel. He sat at the same table with me, and was bragging and boasting about his business success; but he was so fretful and peevish and discontented in his spirit that he made the waiters and everybody about the place hate the sight of him. He may have told the truth about his financial prosperity; but one thing is certain, he was living a fool's life, and his spirit was that of a pauper. His money brought him no comfort; and if you were to give him a thousand dollars for one it would still bring him no comfort. He carries a hell of selfishness and discontent in his own breast, and no amount of success will bring

him happiness so long as he is thus a pauper in his relation to God.

Another important element of this better wealth is in its treasures of sympathy and love. A great nobleman died, and his executors, on looking through his safe, found an iron chest, all locked up, but marked, "To be removed first in case of fire." The lawyers supposed that it contained some valuable document or deed of property, rich jewelry, or costly plate, or a bag of coin; and they were greatly astonished at what they found. They found the toys of his little child that had died many years before. Richer to him were they than all this world's wealth, richer than his ducal coronet, brighter than all the jewels that sparkled on its crest. Not his estate, not his jewels, not his equipage, nothing great or glorious in this world—but the dearest objects to him were the toys of his little child. I suppose some people would call that man a fool. They would say it was all sentiment; but the priceless treasures of the soul lie in that glorious realm of sentiment. Take that away, and man is only a money-grubber with a muck-rake.

Henry Ward Beecher used to tell of a man who lived on the Big Miami bottoms in Mr. Beecher's younger Western days. This farmer was supposed to be worth half a million dollars, which was an enormous fortune at that time. He lived in the upper story of a rattling old log cabin (the first story being given up to his hogs); and when, of a winter's night, their squealing and quarreling would interrupt him, he would kick away a board that

covered a hole in the loose floor and hallo down to them, and sometimes throw things at them. Then, when a momentary quiet had been restored, he would push back the board, and eat or sleep, as the case might be. There are a great many people who live like that in the higher sense. The whole under story of life—the ground level—is filled with swine. And when they make an uproar that disturbs the occupant in the upper story, they are checked a little; but they are never changed, and they are swine still.

It is an awful thing for a man capable of loving, capable of entering into sympathy and fellowship with his kind, capable of exerting himself to bring blessing to immortal spirits, to come down to herding with the swine like that. Yet how many there are who live in just such poverty when the diviner wealth is so easily within their reach.

Another element of this divine wealth is the investment which we get in the souls of those whom, by self-denial and holy living, we are able to snatch as gems from the mire.

Chicago has recently been entertaining a very remarkable woman. Henry Justin Smith tells how she came sailing down through the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes in November, 1899, with a message of love for almost every city on her way. Then her little yacht was moored for months in a spot where the Chicago River runs blackest and the smoke hangs densest. It was a refuge for thousands of men, many of whom might have perished from hunger and cold; and the owner, who was

Countess Adeline Schimmelmann, of Denmark, preached Jesus Christ to them while she supplied their physical wants. And so Chicago was treated to an example of self-sacrifice and love which will not soon fade from the memory of that city.

The Countess Schimmelmann is an eager little lady, with a sensitive, affectionate face. One thought possesses her, is constantly voiced in her conversation, and is carried into all her relations with others: "the simple love of Christ." Her story is very interesting. Yonder in Denmark, where stands the grand castle of her fathers—a line reaching back to the very beginning of Danish history—they still think that her obedience to the command, "Go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," has brought disgrace upon the name of Schimmelmann. She gave up a brilliant career at court to become a practical philanthropist. Born in 1854, she was presented at court at the age of eighteen, serving as chief maid of honor until 1886, admired of nobles and of statesmen. Then came the great shadow, when her relatives, scandalized because she was giving her fortune and her jewels to get funds to carry on her mission work on the Baltic Sea, caused her to be confined in a madhouse, and seized her property. But after a few weeks of the horrible experience she was released through the influence of powerful friends, and permitted to continue her work of feeding the hungry and of proclaiming Christ. But to this day she can hardly speak of that awful time in the madhouse without a shade coming on her radiant face.

For years this countess has been giving not only her money but her time and her young life and soul to the very poorest of men and women, rejoicing in winning the worst to know and love her Savior. Many people say that she is a fool; but she, with a face as kind and sweet as an angel's, and radiant with joy, declares that it is the best investment she ever made, and that her happiness is infinitely multiplied since she began to be rich toward God.

These are some of the jewels she wears now. She was preaching on day in a little Canada town, in the open air, and after she had done, a man stood up at the back of the crowd, flung his hands above his head, and cried, "I believe in Christ, who saves me from sin." He was the leading man in the town, and had been a savage atheist; but the charm of this noble lady's presence and the sincerity evidenced by her self-sacrifice broke down his unbelief, and the little countess counts him as one of her jewels among her riches toward God.

She went into a prison in Detroit, and there saw two colored girls behind the bars. They were wild from confinement, and climbed up on their cage like panthers, shrieking and showing their teeth. But the countess went into the cage with them, and gave herself to them in such sympathy and tenderness that she won their hearts and won them both from their sins to a Christian life, and she holds them as precious black diamonds of the heavenly wealth.

She once held a meeting among the men who

sell liquor to sailors on the Baltic Sea. Naturally they were wicked, desperate characters. She went about among them, personally inviting them to her meetings. She said, "Won't you come and learn how to make your business more profitable?" A great crowd of them came together, and she said to them: "Just give up selling liquor, and give your hearts to Christ. That 's the way to make your business profitable." The miracle of it is that the Holy Spirit so blessed her consecration to the salvation of men that a large number of these desperate men did give up their iniquitous business, and became earnest and happy Christians.

When she was in the Thousand Islands, there was to be a great ball at one of the fine club-houses there. Very naturally, these fashionable people were desirous of having a live countess present at their ball; and so they urged her to come. At first she declined; and then a bright thought came to her, and she said, "If you will let me speak for Christ, I will come." That ball was turned into a gospel service, and she spoke with faithfulness for her Lord.

Now this woman, to whom following Christ has meant so much, is receiving, from all over the world, letters from men and women who tell her that they have found Christ through her. And she declares that she only knew what wealth was and what happiness was when she began to use her earthly riches in such a way as to convert them into the wealth that takes hold upon God and eternity.

We are not all countesses, and we do not all

have fortunes to give; but the mind of humanity is open for every one of us; and, after all, the richest treasure she gives is her sympathy, her kindness, herself; and all of us may enter into that fellowship and may be thus gathering treasures that will rejoice our hearts forever.

IV

The Palmistry of the Saints

"All his saints are in thy hand."—DEUT. XXXIII, 3.

DR. ALEXANDER MACLAREN has said that this ancient Hebrew singer, who knew nothing about the incarnation or the cross, rose, in the song of which this is a fragment, to the height which the last of the apostles reached in the last of his writings, and in his own dialect says, with John, "We love him because he first loved us;" that, like an orchid growing on a bit of dry wood, and yet putting forth a gorgeous bloom, this man, with so little to feed his faith in comparison with what nourishes ours, yet bore this fair flower of deep insight into the secret of things and the heart of God.

The entire paragraph is striking. It gives a majestic picture of God. "And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words."

The message which I wish especially to bring to you at this time is the lessons suggested by the figure of the hand, which is used in the Bible so commonly in reference to the relation of God and Christ to the Christian. The first thought is that of security. The hand of God is a safe place for those who trust him. Christ declared to his disciples that no one would ever be able to snatch them out of his hand. We may take ourselves, by our own willfulness and sin, beyond the reach of the Divine protection, and bring upon ourselves disaster and ruin; but no one else can do it so long as we submit ourselves to God. God will never fail to keep his great promises, with which the Bible is filled, if we fulfill our part of the conditions.

A simple old man, seventy-four years of age, had to work very hard for a living; but he found great comfort in his Bible. The minister called to see him one day in his little home, and found him held fast to his chair with rheumatism; but the old man had his big family Bible open before him, with his horn spectacles on, and with his horny fingers tracing out, one by one, the words of the Sacred Book. The preacher went up to him, and, looking over his shoulder, noticed some writing on the margin of the Bible. On examining more carefully, he found that the old man had written one word continually on the margin. It was the word "Proved." He looked along, and found it had a regular system. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."—"Proved." "My sheep . . . shall never perish; neither shall any man

pluck them out of my hand."—"Proved." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—"Proved." "Trust in the Lord, and do good, . . . and verily thou shalt be fed."—"Proved." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." —"Proved." And so it went on through the Book. The dear old saint had taken God's Book and written out his own experience on the margin. Against each promise of the Bible, as he had found it to come true in his own life, he had written that word, "Proved." What a new Bible it would be to us if we were to take the same plan and write our own experience between the lines! How it would illuminate our periods of depression! How it would banish the blues and comfort our hearts if we were constantly conscious that we are in God's hands, that the strong grip of his fingers is about us, that the kindly warmth of his palm holds us, that no harm can come to us while we are there, and no one shall be able to snatch us away from that safe refuge.

The same figure is used in the Bible to show us how God keeps us in constant remembrance. In Isaiah he says, in speaking of his people, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." In that day it was a common practice to tattoo on the hands or arms tribal marks, and it was also common to brand in a cruel way some indication of ownership of a slave as a Western rancher brands his cattle.

Paul refers to this when he says, in substance,

in his letter to the Galatians, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear brands on my body, the marks of the Lord Jesus." Paul was pleased to feel that the marks which had been left on him by hardship and trial received through his devotion to Jesus had come to him for Christ's sake, and bore their silent but eloquent testimony to the fact that he was an honest and faithful servant of Jesus Christ. But how tender is the illustration when God says to those who seek to do his will, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." If he had graven the names of his people on his forehead, other people might see, but he would not; but he puts them on his hands, where he can see them. The hands are the executive powers of the body. Most of the orders that come from the brain for the safety and control of every-day life come to the hands. The hands are the seat of skill, strength, defense, and accomplishment. It is as though God said to us, "All the skill of my infinite wisdom, all the power of my omnipotence, I put at your disposal; for I have graven your image on the palm of my hand, and no one shall ever be able to rub it out."

The tenderness of this figure is beyond all our power to illustrate. We do not know how to explain why God loves us so much. It can not be explained at all except on the basis of the Bible revelation of God as a father and as a mother. I have seen many a mother who loved children that nobody else seemed to love. They might be ugly and ill-favored and unpleasant, but the mother loved them just the same. So God seems to love people when we do

not see anything in them worth loving. He sees it because he looks with the eye of a Heavenly Father.

How it should take away every thought of austerity and hardness from our conception of God when we hear him say, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." It brings us so close to him that we can appreciate the thought of the little boy at Duxhurst, England, in Lady Somerset's home for slum children, who, after he had finished saying his prayers, did as children often do, and put in another petition as a kind of postscript. "And please, God, would you mind giving my mother a kiss?" Some one has written a poem, which I think interprets the pretty idea unusually well:

"Please, God, I have finished my prayers,
But there's one thing I want to say,
My mother lives up at the top of the stairs,
And she's lonely now I'm away.

You'll be sure to know her, because
There ain't nobody half so good;
And she's just the dearest that ever was,
I'd die for her if I could.

The neighbors are not very bad,
But, of course, they aren't like me,
I've got for to think what will make her glad,
And to get her a cup of tea.

And sometimes, please, God, she ain't strong,
She have got such a lot to do,
And it frets her so much when folks does wrong,
And she thinks no end of you.

When she 's tired she likes to sit
And lean up hard against me,
For it comforts her aching head a bit,
To rest it upon my knee.

I sit all so still and do n't stir,
And she calls me her bit of joy,
And tells me I 'm like a mother to her
As well as her sonny-boy.

It does hurt me to think of her
All alone by the firelight,
And she ain't got me for to comfort her,
To love her, and hold her tight.

So please, God, I hope you won't mind
If I ask you just to do this—
I 'm sure she 'd take it so very kind
If you 'd please to give her a kiss."

But there is a science of palmistry for us as well as for God. In that same book of Isaiah there is a wonderful paragraph, which tells of God's graciousness and its results upon the people. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." What is meant by subscribing with his hand unto the Lord is that same practice of engraving or tattooing on the hand. It was the putting on the

hand a statement of the fact that he was sacred to God. This makes our Christianity a sacred compact between God and man. I think there are some people who seem to act as though they felt that religion was a one-sided affair. They are comforted and rejoiced so long as you talk to them about their being graven on the hand of God and his loving care for them; but their joy departs when you point out that the necessary condition of such protection and love on God's part must be that their own hands are to be set apart as sacred to God and his service. Yet there is no gospel that we need to preach so earnestly to-day as this.

In the twenty-fourth psalm, David inquires, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" And he answers it by giving as the very first condition, "He that hath clean hands." When Christ would prove to his disciples after his resurrection that he was beyond all doubt the same Jesus who had loved them so devotedly that he had been nailed to the cross in their stead, he spread out his palms before them, and cried, "Behold my hands." There were the prints of the nails that had been driven through the palms of his hands when he was fastened to the cruel cross. How beautiful those hands seemed to the disciples, and what certain testimony they were to his love. So the supreme testimony which we can bear to God and Christ is the testimony of our hands.

Christ is crucified afresh when some man professes by his relation to the Church and to Christian-

ity that he is graven on the hand of God, and yet proves by his conduct that Christ and God are not graven on his hand. It is not the preacher in the pulpit only who should have clean hands that will bear testimony to his integrity when he preaches the word of life to the congregation; but every man or woman who professes the name of Jesus must carry clean hands in business and in social and religious life in order to be helpful as a witness for Christ. If a man oppresses his employees, or is guilty of sharp practice in his business affairs, or fails to do honest work faithfully where he is employed, his profession of Christianity will only hinder the cause of Christ. The Christian's hands should be set apart to honorable practice and fair dealing, sacred to God and humanity. Men will judge us, and will judge the value of the Christianity which we profess, by our conduct.

The Christian hand should be a hand like Christ's, that allows its palm to be nailed to the cross rather than be faithless and disloyal to God. We should have Paul's spirit of devotion, who regarded the wounds made by fighting with beasts as marks of honor in his service for Christ.

The Christian hand should be like Christ's in its helpfulness. The hand of Jesus was never too proud to take that of the leper; it was ever ready to make clay to anoint a blind man's eyes; it went forth willingly to give encouragement and help to the man who was in trouble and was friendless. You and I can not do in detail the same things that Christ did in the same way. We can not reproduce his

life in Palestine; but we can live in his spirit. We can, by God's help, keep our hands clean from the smut of dishonesty or the clutch of ill-gotten money or the deadly paralysis of idleness. We can fill our hands with earnest work, as he did, keeping them loyally faithful to every good and true cause. We can stretch forth our hands to the man who is in need or trouble. We can raise them for the defense of the weak, and make their strength tell on the side of righteousness.

V

The Recognition of Friends in Heaven

"We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."—2 CORINTHIANS v, 8 (Rev. Ver.)

PAUL regarded his body in which he lived on earth not as himself, but as a temporary house which sheltered him from the storm, and made it possible for him to perform the work he had to do. As he gets older, he sometimes speaks of it as a frontiersman might speak of an old log house that he had built in his youth, and in the early days of the settlement, before mills were erected, and when it was impossible to get lumber. The log house served its purpose; but with the passing of years the logs began to decay, the storms wore away the chinking, and the winds began to find their way through the cracks. But if the settler has done well and so gained in substance that he has been able to build a new house, far more spacious and comfortable and beautiful than the old, he does not sorrow over the decay that has come to the old log hut that was once so important.

That is the way that Paul talks about his body. He says the earthly house gets old and perishes; but what of it? He has a house on high—a spiritual house, a house that was built for him by the Lord,

a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Paul never worried about the past. He took courage from the past to believe that out of it a newer and better to-morrow must come. The past and present were to Paul seeds of a new harvest. He believed that out of these seeds a new and glorious future was to be realized. Some poet has sung what seems to me to be Paul's thought:

"They told me, 'The past is dead,'
And bade me look at the leaves
Withering on the ground;
But I turned to them and said,
'Behold, I have found the key
Of a spring that is to be;
And the dear past is not dead—
There is sap still in the tree.'

Then they showed me a nest
Riven by envious winds,
And hanging by a straw,
And said, 'Do you think it best
The birds of your hope should come,
Expecting to find a home
In this mockery of rest?'
Then I said, 'Let me alone.'

. . . . .

The leaves may lie on the ground,
The nest may hang by a straw,
And there may be many graves;
But this I have ever found:
Life is a thing called Death,
That living is more than breath;
The Past is no burial-mound,
But the cradle of my faith."

A great many questions rise to our minds in regard to the future life which it is not possible

for us to answer now. But there are some plain and simple certainties made known to us in God's Word. One of these is that death does not end our lives; that the body is not our conscious self; that the human body is something we can be absent from or live in, and we are the same personality when absent from it as we have been while residing in it.

Another fact closely related to this is that in the future life we are not simply spirits: we are spiritual beings, and shall reside in spiritual houses—that is, we shall have, as Paul says, a spiritual body; but there is a great difference between a spirit and a spiritual body. A spirit is a conscious personality, and the spiritual body is the heavenly form in which the spirit lives. That this spiritual body is in the human form is certainly very clearly indicated in the Bible. Peter and James and John had no difficulty in their recognition of Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration; and all the angels and glorified beings spoken of in the Bible have appeared in the human form. Some people have had much of worry, and some skeptics and enemies of Christ have made a good many sneers about the impossibility of the resurrection of the body; but all such worry and all such sneers are born of folly. The God who made the world, and who carries it on, and who formed man in his own likeness and image, is able to take care of all that is important to his children.

One of the workmen employed by Professor Faraday, the famous scientist, one day acci-

dentally knocked a very beautiful silver cup into a jar of powerful acid. At once it was eaten up by the acid, and no trace of it could be found. The workmen had quite a discussion about it, one affirming that he could find it, while others declared that it was impossible. During the dispute the great chemist himself appeared, and, hearing of the accident, dropped into the jar certain chemicals, and immediately every particle of silver was precipitated to the bottom. The shapeless mass of silver was then handed over to the silversmith who had made the first cup, and he made it into another so like the first that no one could distinguish the difference. Does anybody believe that, if Professor Faraday could recover his scattered cup, the all-wise and infinitely powerful God can not restore the scattered dust of his own loved ones, and bring it together refined and glorified, until a more beautiful form than before shall clothe the spirit of his child?

Another certainty of the heavenly life is that we shall continue to be interested in the same things in which our hearts are most engaged in this world. The little details of human life which connect us with the body will cease to interest us, because no longer needed; but the great things that have interested us in our souls will still be important to us. When Moses and Elias came to visit Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was to talk with him about his coming sacrifice for the sins of the world, the great atonement which he was to make; and these mighty men, who had been in heaven for centuries, and who had hoped for the Messiah that

was to come, were still full of interest in and sympathy with the great plan for the salvation of the world. So we shall be interested in the carrying out of God's loving purpose toward mankind. Death will not rob us of those great interests into which we have put so much toil and thrown so much of our real selves while we lived on earth.

Another certainty of heaven is that we shall recognize there our friends who have been dear to us here. While those relations which naturally have their center in the body will not continue in the heavenly world, all the spiritual sympathy and loving fellowship which are their chief glory on earth will continue in the world beyond. This is not mere theory. Every illustration and inference of the teaching of Christ and of Paul assume, as a matter of course, that this will be true. Christ tells us that Dives, even from his place of torment, saw Lazarus, the beggar who used to lie at his gate; and though he now saw him in marvelously changed circumstances, as the bosom friend of Abraham, one of God's princes, he still knew him and recognized him at once, despite all the wonderful transformation that had come to pass. On this point nothing could be surer evidence than Christ's promise to his intimate friends in that loving talk which he had with them just before his death, that it would be his joyous work in heaven to make ready for them. There were then many mansions in the Father's house, but new ones were to be built; for Christ says to these timid and discouraged friends, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and

prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Christ would not have deceived these men; for in speaking of the many mansions he says, "If it were not so, I would have told you"—that is, if there was to be no heavenly reunion between himself and these loving friends, he would have told them. He would not have let them go on hoping and wishing and dreaming that it might be so, only to be grievously disappointed at the last. Christ evidently said this so that they, and all who should believe on him through their words down to our time and to the end of the world, might feel that every word he said to them about heaven and the home among the Father's mansions, and he himself coming to receive them at the hour of death, might be relied on to the fullest possible extent.

How real this makes the other world, and how near it brings it to us! In the spirit of Paul's words we can sing with James Montgomery:

> "Here in the body pent,
> Absent from him I roam,
> Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
> A day's march nearer home."

And in the same spirit we may be comforted as well about our loved ones who have gone before. We can sing of them with Whittier:

> "I have friends in the Spirit Land—
> Not shadows in a shadowy band,
> Not others but themselves are they,
> And still I think of them the same
> As when the Master's summons came."

Every true Christian heart ought to find precious comfort in this brief study. If we give ourselves in complete surrender to Jesus Christ, we shall find that we are complete in him, and that both for this world and the next there is in him comfort for every sorrow and trouble that can touch or threaten our peace. There is an old rabbinical tradition which says that the manna in the wilderness tasted to every man just what he desired, of whatever dainty or nutriment he was most wistful; that the manna became like the magic cup in the old fairy legends, out of which could be poured any precious liquor at the pleasure of the man who was to drink it. Christ is like that to us. Whatever you need in comfort or blessing you may find in Jesus. He will be the inspiration of your joys, the strength of your hope, and your comforter in time of sorrow and need. And when the white horse and his rider pause before your door to carry away your loved ones, you will find that the only real comforter is Jesus. But you will also find that he is sufficient to your soul's need.

Some years ago, Mr. Rossiter W. Raymond, on the death of a lovely Christian maiden, wrote a little poem entitled "Christus Consolator," which breathes the true spirit of that perfect consolation which the reverent and trusting soul may find in Jesus:

"Beside the dead I knelt for prayer
And felt a Presence as I prayed.
Lo! it was Jesus standing there.
He smiled: 'Be not afraid!'

'Lord, thou hast conquered death, we know;
Restore again to life,' I said,
'This one who died an hour ago,'
He smiled: 'She is not dead.'

'Asleep then, as thyself didst say:
Yet thou canst lift the lids that keep
Her prisoned eyes from ours away!'
He smiled: 'She doth not sleep!'

'Nay, then, tho' haply she do wake,
And look upon some fairer dawn,
Restore her to our hearts that ache!'
He smiled: 'She is not gone!'

'Alas! too well we know our loss,
Nor hope again our joy to touch,
Until the stream of death we cross.'
He smiled: 'There is no such!'

'Yet our beloved seem so far,
The while we yearn to feel them near,
Albeit with thee we trust they are.'
He smiled: 'And I am here!'

'Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and thee,
Nor sleep, nor wander far away?'
He smiled: 'Abide in Me!'"

VI

The Recognition of Friends on Earth

"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not."—PROVERBS XXVII, 9, 10.

A GENTLEMAN was being entertained in a strange home recently, when, sitting on the porch, he saw a number of birds come down and alight on the edge of a large bucket of water by the well. Some of them drank, and then flew away; but some threw water over themselves, and then sat there preening their feathers and chirping happily. Then came two dogs, which took a drink and ran away. Afterwards he saw a cat come up to the bucket, and then a chicken.

"Are all these pets of yours?" the gentleman asked of his hostess.

"O no," said the lady; "but we always keep that bucket well filled, and all the tired, thirsty birds and animals in the neighborhood come to it and seem very thankful for a drink and a bath."

Now, I think it was that kind of a man, with his attention turned toward his fellows, that Isaiah had in mind when he declared that "a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the

shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The Bible ideal of man is that he shall be a friendly creature—a man whose sympathy and kindness reach out on every side, helping everybody, and the sweetness of whose friendliness shall be like ointment and perfume whose fragrance rejoices the heart.

Some people are so busy looking after their dignity, and so afraid that some one will not pay due respect to the magnificent qualities with which they are endowed, that they lose the sweet comfort of friendship. Dignity does not stand very well, however, in the Bible, while friendship has a high place.

Dr. A. C. Dixon, years ago, in an Eastern city, told his official board one night that he felt it his duty to preach on the street. They received his message in silence; and after the meeting was over, one of the brethren took him aside and reasoned with him. "Pastor," said he, persuasively, "it will never do for you to preach on the street. It is undignified, and we must maintain our dignity." Dr. Dixon replied that he would look up the subject of dignity in his Bible, and report to him. The study was, to the preacher, quite a revelation. He found that dignity was not mentioned among the Christian graces, nor is it one of the fruits of the Spirit. The only place where it is spoken of with emphasis is where Solomon says, "Their folly is set in great dignity." What Solomon meant was, that any fool could be dignified. Any man who wants to may stick to dignity; but I would rather have an ounce of the honey of a sincere, loving friendship than a thousand tons of starched-up dignity.

Many other people are so greedy to get together the goods of this world and store up money that they have no time for the gentle ministries of a true and loyal friendship. There could be no greater folly. Such people remind one of a little old woman who got on at a country station for her first journey on the railroad. The other passengers smiled as they watched while she settled herself and her belongings as if she expected to travel around the world. A young relative who was with her called her attention to a beautiful view of the lake; but she was so busy with tucking a veil over her bonnet that she gave it scant notice.

"Pretty soon, John. As soon as I get everything fixed all right, I 'm goin' to sit back and enjoy myself," she said. "I always have been lottin' on a ride in the cars."

But her satchel, basket, and box were not easily arranged to her liking, and the forty-mile ride was brief.

"Already?" she exclaimed, as the name of her destination was called. "Why, I 've hardly had a mite of pleasure from the journey yet! If I 'd thought we were goin' to stop so soon, I would n't have wasted all my time fussin'."

Of course, the passengers all laughed; yet no doubt some of them—and some of you—are taking the whole of life's journey in very much the same fashion as this silly little old woman. You go rushing through the world in too great a hurry to amass money or achieve your purposes to permit you to

taste the sweetness of gentle friendship with your fellow-men. You think after awhile the time will come when you can be friendly; but there is where you are mistaken. You are letting all the years go by during which friends can be easily made, and you are losing the very powers to charm and bless others; so that after awhile, if you should have a little time before you die "to sit back and enjoy yourself," to use the old lady's expression, you will find that the art of enjoyment has never been cultivated, and that the afternoon twilight of life is not the proper time in which to acquire it. The sweetest blessings of life, if they are to be had at all, must be plucked day by day, while the blossoms are on the bushes. Life itself is like the wild rose-tree, about which Richard Watson Gilder sings:

"On the wild rose-tree
Many buds there be,
Yet each sunny hour
Hath but one perfect flower.

Thou who wouldst be wise,
Open wide thine eyes;
In each sunny hour
Pluck the one perfect flower!"

Friendship is a mutual affair, and we must give largely if we would receive largely. He who lives in the "house by the side of the road," as Sam Walter Foss sings, and seeks to make sweeter and nobler the lives of all the passers-by, giving unstintedly of himself to their comfort, will receive in return large

measure, full to overflowing. Having given without stint, he will receive in the same way. Many rob themselves of the rich joys of friendship because they fail to give expression to the friendly kindness and fellowship which is in their hearts. Many people keep the flowers until after the friend is gone, and then heap them on the coffin and the grave. I often go to funerals where I know that for years there have been coldness and restraint and a cruel economy of kindly words and sympathetic care for one another's comfort and happiness, to find the coffin covered with a weight of roses and lilies and beautiful blossoms, indicating the love for the friend who has gone away that is in the hearts of those left behind. And I often say to myself, It would have been much better if these flowers had been distributed along the years, coming in now and then as little reminders at the close of a tired day or a weary week. Mary received a very sweet blessing from the lips of Jesus because she did not wait till after he was dead to break her box of fragrant ointment, but brought it to him while he was alive. Surely the enthusiastic and loving words of Christ in return ought to encourage us to follow her happy example. Our friends will not need these words in heaven. There is no sorrow there. There, where people are never hungry, where there is no crying or tears, where nobody will ever say, "I am sick," or, "I am tired," is no place for the kind and friendly expressions which would mean so much now to those who are climbing the up-hill path amid many discouragements and trials. Some one sings

a little song about saying "The Loving Words Now," which may have its message of rebuke and inspiration for all of us:

"Year after year, with a glad content,
In and out of our home he went—
In and out.
Ever for us the skies were clear;
His heart carried the care and fear,
The care and doubt.

Our hands held with a careless hold
All that he won of power and gold,
In toil and pain.
O, dear hands, that our burdens bore—
Hands that shall toil for us no more—
Never again.

O, it was hard to learn our loss,
Bearing daily the heavy cross—
The cross he bore;
To say with aching heart and head,
'Would to God that the love now dead
Were here once more!'

For when the love we held too light
Was gone away from our speech and sight,
No bitter tears,
No passionate words of fond regret,
No yearning of grief, could pay the debt
Of thankless years.

O, now, while this kind love lingers near,
Grudge not the tender words of cheer,
Leave none unsaid;
For a heart can have no sadder fate
Than some one day to awake—too late—
And find love dead!"

To be the kind of friend we ought to be to others we must ourselves rejoice in the luxury of the friend-

ship of Jesus Christ. An old fable tells how a Persian moralist once took up in his hand a piece of scented clay, and said to it, "O clay, whence hast thou thy perfume?" And the clay said, "I was once a piece of common clay, but they laid me for a time in company with a rose, and I drank in its fragrance, and have now become scented clay." So if we would have the rare perfume which makes friendship the sweetest human thing in all the world, we must lie in God's rose-garden, with our hearts close to the Rose of Sharon, where we shall be pervaded through and through with the sweet fragrance of heaven.

One of the sweetest things in the Bible is that we are assured of Christ's longing for our friendship. He says to the disciples, "I have called you friends." He wants our friendship. He needs you and me. He longs to have us love him and open our hearts to him, and share with him, as friends do, all that is best in us and in himself. He tells us that if we are trying to do what pleases him we are his friends. John records one of his love speeches that each of us ought to commit to memory: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should re-

main: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another."

To-day Christ is calling you to this friendship. Many of you are his friends and rejoice in it; but some have always turned a deaf ear to his tender entreaties. Remember the condition is simply to keep his commandments, or, in other words, to do what will please him. That you can do here and now. He has declared that if you will confess him before men, it will so please him that he will confess you in heaven. Will you not, just now, accept and enter into the friendship of Jesus?

VII

Mutual Dependence of Humanity

"Every one members one of another."—ROMANS XII, 5.

THE human body with its diversity of members all working together in harmony and fellowship to produce a common beneficent result was a favorite figure with Paul. He elaborates it at length in the twelfth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians. He sets forth there that the Golden Rule is the law of the human body; no part of the body is independent. No part can boycott or blacklist any other part without suffering for it. No part of the body is able to set up for itself and say, "I am the only important member of the firm."

"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it not therefore of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.

And the eye can not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

I have quoted the entire illustration because there certainly is no better to be found to make clear to our minds the great truth of the oneness of humanity and of the fellowship which it is necessary for us to have one with another. As we go on in civilization, and life becomes more elaborate and complex, this mutual dependence is emphasized more and more. No man is so rich in our day but he must depend every hour of the day for his very life upon the fidelity of many humble people. The great railroad magnate may ride across the land in the night in his palatial private car on a special train and think himself independent; but his life for that single night depends upon hundreds of telegraphers and switchmen and humble workmen whom he has never seen. Unless they work together with him in hon-

est fellowship, his independence would soon come to wreck and disaster. And so in every department of human life it is more true in our time than ever before that "no man liveth unto himself." The strong need the weak, and the weak need the strong. Dives treated Lazarus with contempt, and left him to starve at his gate; but he impoverished his own soul in the doing of it. As another has well said, There is no other way by which society can be held together save by the principle of mutual benevolence ministering to mutual dependence. The strong must bear the infirmities of the weak, or the universal order of creation would become chaotic and destructive; for the universe is peopled with weakness. If we look out on the hillside and forest and valley we find there are but few oaks, but very many are the rushes. Yet there is not a spire of grass, a bird, or a worm so low and meek but that it has its place and its part in God's universe. If the strong should ignore the principle of love, the world would be swept back into the darkness. But the weak also help the strong. The grasses are necessary to the roots of the oak, or they will die. And so through all the orders of life, from trees to men, you will find that the humble things are needed by the proud and the lofty. The millionaire needs the workingman who carries his dinner-pail just as much as the workingman needs him. The branches of the tree need the soil as much as the soil needs the branches. Therefore, if a man is poor and have few talents, it is not wise or true for him to say: "I am of no use. If I had talents or money or knowledge or power I might help people." For however small and

lacking, there is a place for every one of us where we may help to bless the world. If we can not be great trees, then we can be grasses, and know that the grasses are as necessary to the world's beauty as the trees.

At the outbreak of the Civil War there were many sturdy men among the farmers in the North who could hardly be spared from their farms, who, nevertheless, thought it their duty to go and fight for their country. One day about this time a gentleman was going along the highway, and he saw a small boy at the plow. He asked how it was that he was obliged to do work that was not the work of a little boy at all, but of a grown man. "Well, you see, sir," said the boy, "father 's fighting and mother 's praying and I 'm working. We are all doing what we can." That boy was a Christian philosopher. He knew that for every one to fit into the thing he could do was the right way to get all the necessary work done.

Dr. Talmage declares that the Christian religion is a democratic religion. It makes the owner of the mill understand he is a brother to all the operatives in that mill. The religion of Jesus Christ came to rectify all the wrongs of the world, and it will yet settle all these troublesome questions between labor and capital. When the Christian leaven has fully done its work, the hard hand of the wheel and the soft hand of the counting-room will clasp each other in happy congratulation. The hard hand will say, "I plowed the desert into a garden." The soft hand will reply, "I furnished the seed." The one will say, "I threshed the mountains." The other

will say, "I paid for the flail." The one hand will say, "I hammered the spear into a pruning-hook." The other hand will answer, "I signed the treaty of peace that made that possible." Then capital and labor will lie down together, and there will be nothing to hurt and destroy in all God's earth. Let every man and woman of us be doing our part to bring about that happy day!

Now, all this is peculiarly appropriate when applied to the Christian Church. Paul's teaching is that Christ is the Head of the body, which is his Church. We are members in particular of this great body of Christ. Just as my right hand is kin to my left hand, and both of them are in fellowship and sympathy with my eyes and my feet, because they are all members of the same body, so we are members one of another in the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A keen appreciation of this great truth will surely save us from envy or contempt; for if any member of Christ's Church is gifted and useful and happy, then I must have something from it. Can you imagine the flowers in a beautiful bouquet being depressed because of the beauty of others? Shall the lily mourn because of the beautiful coloring of the rose? Shall the rose be sad because the carnation is so fragrant? Rather, shall not each one of them rejoice that the other is so beautiful? The beauty of one does not detract from the other, and the diversity of beauty brought together adds to the common worth and beauty of the bouquet.

Shall Paul be sad because John is so loving?

Shall John have the blues because Paul is such a bright, courageous spirit, shaking off all opposition as he shook that island snake into the fire after the shipwreck? Shall either of them feel badly because Stephen had the face of an angel in the midst of persecution? Ah, no! The love of one, the joyous courage of another, and the angelic peace of the third is a common heritage of Christian beauty and glory which may add to the rejoicing of all. Let us thank God for every spiritual gift he has bestowed upon any member of the Church, and by admiring its beauty, by breathing its fragrance, be ourselves provoked to good works.

On the other hand, a proper insight into this great spiritual theme, revealing our relation to one another, must save us from indifference or contempt for our weaker and frailer brethren and sisters. For no member of the body can suffer but that all others must suffer with it. If the tooth ache, does not the whole body suffer? If there be a felon on the finger, does not the whole body suffer? If there be a sore foot, does not the whole body suffer? If there be a cinder in the eye, does not the whole body suffer with it? We are members one of another in the Church in a relation as sensitive as is the human body, and one can not fall into sin or sorrow but the whole Church must suffer, and every one must lose something of spiritual comfort and strength through the loss that has come to the brother that has fallen.

The Church as a whole gets its power through this combined harmony and fellowship uniting in loyal devotion to Jesus Christ. Dr. Lyman Abbott

compares the unifying of the Church for power to the charging of an electric battery. The chemist mixes his various elements together and the conditions are fulfilled; electricity is there. He does not summon electricity from some remote distance; but already dormant in these elements was the electric power, and when they are combined, instantly the electric power springs into existence. So it is as if Christ said to us: "In each one of you Christians there is a dormant power. I am in you; but there is more of me in all of you together than there is in any one of you separately and individually; and when you have combined around my banner and my name to do my will, there springs into existence not merely the strength that comes from union, but the diviner help that comes from this, that I am in the midst of that organization, the Spirit that inspires the body." It becomes at once more than human—it becomes divine the body of Christ.

VIII

The Beauty and the Glory of Helpfulness

"They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smiteth the anvil, saying of the soldering, It is good."—ISAIAH XLI, 6, 7 (Rev. Ver.)

THE keynote contention of Christian civilization is that the supreme purpose of a man's life should be ministry instead of mastery. The old standard of selfishness judged greatness by its power to dictate to others. The new ideal set up by Jesus Christ calls him greatest who is the greatest helper of his fellows. A man is not to be considered of vast importance because it takes a large number of people to bear his burdens for him, but rather because he is able to bear the burdens of many who are weaker than himself.

It is not, however, my purpose to speak at this time of the occasional giants of the race who bare their shoulders with heroism and love to carry the burdens of a nation or a people; but to speak of the common every-day helpfulness which is witnessed in average human life, and which is to be seen more and more as the years go on. For I believe helpfulness is a good deal more common than the average

one among us appreciates. It is so much easier to take note of the selfish, cruel act than it is of the little deed of self-denying kindness which is so common and so expected in this gentler age in which we are living, that the latter often passes unnoticed.

I have been impressed with a story, told recently, of a large, powerful man who had jostled and fought his way through the crowd at the entrance to the Brooklyn bridge, and was scowling fiercely as he pushed out a big dent in his hat. Seated next to him in the bridge-car was a man who had an office in the same building. The stout man pointed to the battered hat and said: "I believe men—and women, too, for that matter—are no better than savages. It 's every one for himself. There is n't a day passes but that I see something which convinces me civilization is only skin deep."

"I 'm afraid you see only one side of it," replied his neighbor. "There are lots of good things to be seen every day, too. Now, here is something that gives me a good deal of happiness during the year."

He pulled a small note-book from an inside pocket. Then he went on: "I used to feel as you do—that people are very selfish; but when I began to study them more closely I saw so many pleasant things that I got in the habit of making notes of them, and so I carry this little book. Here 's what I have jotted down to-day, for instance: On my way to the bridge this morning my hat blew off. I chased it, but before I reached it three other men were after it, and one of them caught it for me. Now, that was an entirely unselfish act on the part of these men, who

were strangers to me; and you may see the same thing any windy day. As I was crossing City Hall Park a woman in front of me dropped a glove without knowing it. Two boys made a dive for it, and shouted, 'Lady, lady, you 've dropped your glove.' Just as I reached Broadway a truckman's horse fell. The driver had hardly left his seat before the drivers of three other trucks stopped, got down, and began to help raise the horse. They did it because they saw a fellow-workman in trouble, and knew that they might need the same help at any time. When I went out to luncheon I left my umbrella in the restaurant. Before I reached the door a stranger who had been sitting at the same table tapped me on the shoulder and handed me the umbrella. On my way back to the office I passed a heavy two-horse load of flour stuck on the car-track. I stopped a minute to look, and saw several men put their hands to the muddy wheels and push till the dray started. They had no selfish interest in that load of flour; they only wanted to help. When I entered the office building the man just ahead of me carefully held the big door so that it might not swing back in my face."

Now all these are little things, but they show something very different from savagery, and they can be duplicated in kind by every one of us almost any day we live. And none of us are surprised that the man who had been listening to all this dropped a pace behind his neighbor as they went down the stairs at the other end of the bridge, and, as his custom was, picked out the most ragged newsboy he could see to hand his newspaper to, so that the little fellow could

make an extra penny out of it. We shall find a great deal of brotherliness, and neighborly kindness, and sweet unselfishness if we are on the lookout. Some one sings:

"Not all the saints are canonized;
There's lots of them close by,
There's some of them in my own ward,
Some in my family.
They're thick here in my neighborhood,
They throng here in my street;
My sidewalk has been badly worn
By their promiscuous feet.

Not all the heroes of the world
Are apotheosized;
Their names make our directories
Of very ample size.
And almost every family,
Whose number is complete,
Have one or more about the board
When they sit down to eat.

Not all the martyrs of the world
Are in the martyrology;
Not all their tribe became extinct
In some remote chronology.
Why weep for saints long dead and gone?
There're plenty still to meet;
Put on your wraps and call upon
The saints upon your street."

The beginning of helpfulness is in an appreciation of the condition and deeds of others. If we look at our fellow men and women about us with a kindly and sympathetic eye, seeking to take them at their best, giving them credit not for their worst but for

their best, we shall help very much the happiness of the world.

Arthur Turner, one of the foremost of England's younger artists, claims that he owes his opportunity to become an artist to a single happy stroke of his pencil. The young boy was an apprentice in a tinner's shop in a cathedral town, and on Sundays he sang in one of the chapels of the cathedral. One day when the service was dull to the boy he drew a picture on the fly-leaf of a music-book, and forgot to erase it before the time came for singing. The rector of the church, seeing the sketch, considered it his duty to speak with him about it. After giving him a gentle rebuke for defacing the book, he complimented the young artist on his skill, and suggested that he ought to become an art student. "Suppose," he added, "you make a portrait of myself as I appear to you. If you succeed, I will not only buy the picture, but will assist to secure for you a scholarship in one of the Royal Art schools."

The picture was made during the next week, and the young tinner went with fear and trembling to the rectory to show his work and learn his fate, for his interest had become thoroughly aroused in the proposed scholarship.

The rector was a man of fine form and noble face, except that his nose was about half an inch longer than was required in order to make a beautiful combination with the rest of his countenance. It was quite commonly known that this extra half-inch of nose was a great trial to the good rector.

In drawing the face of his pastor, the kind-hearted

boy had corrected nature's error. The uncalled-for half-inch of nose was safely and tenderly removed. The face then appeared exactly as the subject would have desired to look.

That the friendly act of the young artist was justifiable the rector did not question. He pronounced the work admirable, and hung it in his study. He said to himself that a youth possessing such talent and wisdom ought to be encouraged to develop his powers. He interested himself in sending the lad to one of the great art schools of England. From that day Turner's fame grew, and to-day he is head master of the Royal Art school at York, England. Recently, referring to his beginnings in art, he playfully characterized that first portrait as a thoroughly successful operation in surgery, and the happiest stroke of his life.

Now this incident should suggest a great fact. We ought not always to be looking out for flaws in people, or in the conditions of life; but rather seek to encourage those who are ready to faint, and soften and mollify the trying circumstances with which people have to do.

"Don't look for flaws as you go through life;
And even when you find them
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind
And look for the virtue behind them.
For the cloudiest night has a hint of the light
Somewhere in its shadows hiding;
It is better by far to hunt for a star
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

The current of life runs ever away
To the bosom of God's great ocean;
Don't set your force 'gainst the river's course
And think to alter its motion.
Don't waste a curse on the universe
Remember, it lived before you.
Don't butt at the storm with your puny form,
But bend and let it fly o'er you.

The world will never adjust itself
To suit your whim to the letter;
Something must go wrong your whole life long,
And the sooner you know it the better.
It is folly to fight with the Infinite,
And go under at last in the wrestle.
The wiser man shapes into God's plan
As the water shapes into the vessel."

Words of good cheer are peculiarly in harmony with Christian civilization. A phrase which was often on the lips of Jesus was, "Be of good cheer!" We should follow his example, and be ever alert and ready to speak the word or do the deed that will encourage the weary and the tired to take up their burden with stronger purpose, and carry it forward with nobler hope. Cheerfulness gets more out of men than scolding; hope, not despair, puts nerve into tired limbs. Many an honest worker has dropped by the wayside for lack of appreciation. It often means more than a man dreams to say of a man's work as the goldsmith of our text did to the blacksmith, "It is a good job." It is strange we do not speak such words more frequently, when they cost so little, and give such rich returns in helpful joy.

I think one reason we do not more promptly seize opportunities for helpfulness is that we do not feel as we ought the true neighborliness of human life. Dr. Robert Collyer, of New York, was once a popular pastor in Chicago. It was some years ago, but he had it recalled in a pleasant way last summer. He was in London, and as he went down the Strand on a hot day he saw a place where American soda-water was advertised. The clerk gave him some, and smiled at him. The doctor smiled back and smacked his lips, it was so good. When he had finished one glass he said, "Give me another." The clerk smiled at him again as he gave it to him, and the preacher smiled back. After he had finished the second glass he said, "How much?" The clerk replied, "Nawthin'; I know you; I come from Chicago." What we want is to make that feeling of neighborliness stretch all around God's green earth, until men and women everywhere shall feel its appeal to brotherly sympathy and fellowship.

The pastor of St. Paul's Church, in the city of Washington, has for many years been collecting silver and gold and jewels to make a superb chalice. The jewels consist of about two hundred pearls, a large number of diamonds, many rubies, and other rare stones, coming from several hundred donors. There are nuggets of gold and silver, coins and jewelry, many of them old family relics with a history tragic or pathetic. Some are heirlooms handed down for generations in old families. Some of them have flashed their beauty in the courts of the Old World, and others were worn by fair dames during the stir-

ring times of the Revolution. One magnificent gift, a diamond cross, will be placed on the front of the chalice, retaining its exquisite setting. There are diamonds and pearls that have adorned happy brides, and reflected the tears of the bereaved; tiny rings and bracelets worn by the dead children of lonely mothers; gems symbolic of love, and souvenirs of brave men who have given their lives in defense of the Stars and Stripes, among the last being a gold pencil taken from the body of a soldier in the Mexican War; little mementos given by the widows and orphans of soldiers in the Civil War; gold nuggets and coins taken from ships sunk in the Spanish-American War, and a ring from the hand of a volunteer who shed his blood on the battlefield of Santiago de Cuba. It is rarely that so many silent witnesses of tears and smiles are gathered together. Each has been dear to some heart, and the owners with religious devotion have given them to adorn the chalice which will be used daily in the solemn services of the Church.

Brothers, sisters, life itself is the great sacrament, and it is for us to make it romantic, heroic, holy, by bringing into it day by day the jewels of tenderness and love, the heroism of self-sacrifice in behalf of the weak and the defeated, the true gold of brotherly sympathy, the white silver of our kindness, the diamonds of good cheer, the pearls of appreciation, and cheerfully make our contribution to the good-will and happiness of human life. God will melt it down in the daily furnace of experience; he will mold it and fashion it, and in that brotherly, helpful

co-operation the Holy Supper will be kept indeed. I call you all this day to this beautiful life of helpfulness.

"There are so many helpful things to do
Along life's way
(Helps to the helper, if we did but know),
From day to day!
So many troubled hearts to soothe,
So many pathways rough to smooth,
So many comforting words to say
To the hearts that falter along the way.

Here is a lamp of hope gone out
Along the way.
Some one stumbled and fell, no doubt—
But, brother, stay!
Out of thy store of oil refill;
Kindle the courage that smolders still;
Think what Jesus would do to-day
For one who had fallen beside the way.

How many lifted hands still plead
Along life's way!
The old, sad story of human need
Reads on for aye.
But let us follow the Savior's plan—
Love unstinted to every man!
Content if, at most, the world should say:
'He helped his brother along the way.'"

IX

A Reasonable Religion

"Your reasonable service."—ROMANS XII, 1.

PAUL was a very sane man. He never went at things in a haphazard way. He was always ready to give a reason for the faith that was in him. He was also a well-rounded man. With him faith and practice went together. One of the grandest things he ever said about himself was when, standing before King Agrippa, he declared, "I have not been disobedient unto the heavenly vision." If Paul saw in the night a man of Macedonia appealing to him, the next day his face was turned that way. First the vision, then the life.

All these traits of Paul's character are illustrated in this letter to the Romans. The first eleven chapters are given to a discussion of the great Christian doctrines. Step by step, with steady tread, Paul climbs to the high ground of Christian faith. He begins this letter by declaring in the very first chapter that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And then he sets to work to tell the story of Christ's mediatorial work for sinners, and to explain and illustrate it. With great

clearness he sets forth the sinner's desperate need of a Savior. Sin had come into the world; it had tainted the race; death had passed upon all men, and then Jesus Christ came and was born under the law, that he might save those that were under the law. And Paul declares that just so far as sin has run in the human race, the cleansing blood of Christ runs with saving power, able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him. He sets forth the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and is himself a witness to Christ after he has been clothed upon with immortality. He shows forth the extent and the glory of Christ's salvation as being offered both to the Jew and the Greek, to the bond and the free, and unfolds one after another all the great doctrines of grace unto salvation.

It is upon this great foundation of fact and faith and hope, which he has been building through eleven chapters, that the apostle plants his feet as he begins to write the twelfth chapter. How much it makes this word "therefore" mean! "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." The word "therefore" is a connecting link between the great Christian doctrines which Paul has been setting forth and the Christian life to which he now calls them. And not only this chapter, but the rest of the entire letter is given up to the most earnest exhortation to right living. It is as though Paul said, "Therefore, brethren, because man was a poor lost sinner sunk deep in the mire, despairing and without hope, and God so loved him in his lost estate that he gave the Lord Jesus Christ to come to earth and share his

temptations and trials, and die on the cross in his behalf, and go down into the grave and come up out of it again, having burst the bonds of death; and because Christ ever lives as the Savior and Redeemer of sinners; and because this message is to all men, not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles; therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your bodies a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service."

When men are called to a religious life as disciples of Jesus Christ, they are not called to anything strange or unnatural. God's mercy and love have been so great, and have been manifested so tenderly, that it is not an unreasonable thing for us in return to give ourselves to whole-hearted service of the Lord. Gratitude for great gifts or great service is the most reasonable thing in the world. Everybody feels that nothing is more wicked and unnatural than ingratitude. When we see a child who has received kind and loving ministry from a father or a mother throughout its whole life until it has grown into manhood or womanhood, and then treats with harshness or indifference and neglect the parent who has become old, or weak, or poor, we are stirred to the very quick at the sight, because we feel that such ingratitude is not only base and wicked, but unnatural. And so Paul feels that it is very unnatural for one to remember the goodness of God, his great mercy in giving Christ to be our Savior, and not respond in the most earnest and practical gratitude in the giving of the body—that is, of the whole self—a living sacrifice unto him. In another place Paul has explained this as most reasonable since we are not our

own. We were the slaves of sin; but we have been bought by the blood of Christ, and belong naturally and by right to him who has purchased us. And it is but reasonable that unto him who hath redeemed us from the dread despair of guilt and sin we should respond with a love and affection which will show forth in every act of our daily lives.

When the late Earl Cairns was a little boy he heard three words which made a remarkable impression on him, "God claims you!" Then came the question, "What am I going to do with the claim?" He answered, "I will own it, and give myself to God." He went home and told his mother, "God claims me." At school and college his motto was, "God claims me." As member of Parliament, and finally as Lord Chancellor, it was still "God claims me." When he was appointed Lord Chancellor he was a teacher of a large Bible-class, and his minister, thinking now that he would have no time to devote to that purpose, said to him, "I suppose you will now require to give up your class?" "No," was the reply, "I will not; God claims me."

So God claims every one of us, and his claim is just and reasonable, and the most interesting problem in your life and mine is, "What response am I making to God's claim?"

In the most unexpected places we are called upon to answer in regard to God's claim on us. When General Grant was in Paris the President of the French Republic, as a special token of respect, invited him to a place on the grand stand to witness the horse-racing which occurs in that country on Sun-

day. It is considered a discourteous act to decline such an invitation from the head official of the Republic. Such a thing had never been heard of; but General Grant, in a polite note, declined the honor, and said to the French President, "It is not in accordance with the custom of my country, or with the spirit of my religion, to spend Sunday in that way." And when Sabbath came that great hero found his way to the American chapel, where he was one of the quiet worshipers. That was a noble recognition of God's claim and an exhibition of a species of backbone of religious faith and purpose that is very greatly needed in our own time and in our own country.

Governor Theodore Roosevelt, of New York, said a great thing the other day when he declared that "One individual who is not entitled to exist in a community like ours is the timid good man." Mr. Roosevelt says we need citizens of the type of Oliver Cromwell, who once said: "If I were to choose any servant, the meanest officer for the Commonwealth, I would choose a godly man who had principles, especially where a trust is to be committed, because I know where to have a man that hath principles." And we need men to-day with principles that are held to the bed-rock by the conviction that they are God's men and must live up to his demands.

Thank God, there are some such men! A friend recently told me of a man, a wholesale merchant, who was notified by a firm that had dealt largely with him in the past, that they could not continue to do business with him unless he changed his attitude

toward the liquor-traffic. It happened that the wholesale merchant had been a very active temperance man. When this word came, he straightened himself up and looked the agent full in the eyes and said, "Go tell your firm, with my compliments, that it is my goods, and not my principles, which are for sale." If every man in the Christian Church had a backbone like that, born of conscientious consecration to Christ in recognition of the mercies of God, we would have enough leaven of Christian force to rapidly revolutionize modern civilization, not only in business and in society, but in politics as well.

It is well to notice that Paul's idea of religion was that it was a vital, earnest, living experience. It is a living sacrifice to which he calls these people, not a dead sacrifice from which the blood of human feeling and sensation has been let out. According to Paul's idea, we are not to approach the perfect life by hiding ourselves away, even though we hide under an altar; but by throwing ourselves into the thick of the human struggle as the living soldiers of Jesus Christ.

There is a French painting called "La Religieuse," meaning "The Religious Woman." And this picture gives the idea of a religious woman which was held by the old Roman Church. The artist has painted a nun who spends her time in replenishing the oil in a lamp that is burning before the image of the Virgin Mary. Not the faithful wife and the joyful mother of children is portrayed, but the woman who spends her whole time in replenishing the oil in the lighted lamp before the dead image! No wonder that the last

religious census in France tells of eight millions of men who entered themselves as of no religion! It is a live Christianity that we want, and a live Christianity comes from live Christians.

And the sacrifice that God asks of us is not something that we give to him once, and then look back to it as a finished experience; but a sacrifice that is new and different with every morning sunrise and every noonday struggle. Hugh Price Hughes, speaking to a company of young ministers who had just been ordained, said that when he was a young man there was a curious expression often repeated (you and I have often heard it repeated), that we ought to preach the gospel "as dying men to dying men." Mr. Hughes says he never liked it; there was something melancholy about it, although it meant well; and he suggests that we substitute this, "Let us preach as living men to living men, our message concerning the living Christ." The charm of a Christian life is in this living sensitiveness of the soul that recognizes God's claim and responds to it with gratitude, giving a whole-hearted devotion. When that breath of life is out, the magnetic charm disappears.

A recent writer tells how he once heard Wendell Phillips give one of his noted lectures, which had every quality that goes to make up high excellence except one. The subject of the lecture was interesting, for it was Daniel O'Connell, the Irish agitator. The speaker evidently had been greatly interested in the subject when, many years before, he had written the lecture, for he was at that time himself the leading New England agitator. The lecture was well

written; it abounded in striking rhetorical passages, and it was delivered with that grace of gesture and ease and beauty of utterance which gave Phillips the foremost place among the platform speakers of his day. But the truth was that the lecture, in spite of its faultless structure and nearly faultless delivery, was a flat failure as an utterance about an agitator. It did not agitate. Not a pulse in that audience was quickened by it. The speaker had lost interest in his subject, and he could not create in his hearers an interest which was not present in his own soul. He had been interested in the subject years before, but at the time when this gentleman heard him he was a man well advanced in years, the night was stormy, the audience was small, he was lecturing to fulfill a contract, and there was not a flash of fresh enthusiasm in the entire lecture. So far as the earnest, fiery, enthusiastic oratory of his early anti-slavery days was concerned, it was almost a post-mortem utterance. It did not thrill the soul with the electric power of contemporary enthusiasm.

Now this may well illustrate the loss of fresh enthusiasm and of vital, living, spiritual earnestness in a Christian life. If Wendell Phillips had suddenly been confronted with some live oppression, with some earnest struggle for liberty that would have aroused the old spirit that was in his blood when first he made that lecture on Daniel O'Connell, the lost fire would have come back to his eye, and the charm of that blood-earnestness which glorified him in his best days would have been felt by the audience. So the sacrifice which

we make to God, the service which we render him in response to his great mercies toward us, must be a living service. It must be vital with every day's meditation; it must be quickened and refreshed by daily communion; it must renew its youth in incidents of service daily given, in new helpfulness toward the suffering, in an outstretched hand to the weak, and in earnest effort to rescue those in the bondage of sin. Time has no power to take the flash from the Christian's eye, to take the holy glow from his cheek, to take the magnetic love from his heart, if he gives himself entirely and whole-heartedly to this acceptable and reasonable service to God.

X

The Perils of Egotism

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."—ROMANS XII, 3.

THE figure used in this case suggests the unwisdom of an intoxicated man. Paul urges his readers to think soberly; that is, not to have the exaggerated ideas of a man who is drunk with wine. The man whose head is turned with strong drink often has very large ideas of his own strength, or his own ability to accomplish things, and he is led into many foolish sayings and actions because of these drunken estimates of himself.

But a man may be intoxicated on something besides liquor; pride and vanity may inflate the thought so that a man may cherish opinions concerning his own abilities as erroneous as he would have if he were a drunkard.

No teaching here indicates that it is not proper and right for every one of us to have a fair and just idea of our own powers. It is impossible for us not to form an estimate of our mental and moral qualities, as we do of our physical qualities, and it is perfectly right. If a man has a farm, and proposes to get

his living by tilling it, it is certainly the part of wisdom for him to know his farm thoroughly. He should know the different kinds of soil on both the high and the low lands, and should know where the soil is shallow, as well as were it is deep and rich. All this is necessary in order that he may till it to the best advantage, and produce the most profitable crops. So our nature is our farm to be tilled, and it is imperative that we have a wise and comprehensive estimate of our own abilities, so that we shall do our work well, and make the very best of ourselves.

Our peril is that when we come to measure ourselves we are likely to measure our pride and our feelings, and not to measure our real abilities in a sober, matter-of-fact way, such as we would use if we were forming a judgment on some one else. We are likely to judge ourselves and esteem ourselves as greatly enhanced in value for reasons which in judging another we would at once throw out of the scales as of no importance. As a matter of theory we know that honesty and truth, a clear sense of justice, a purpose to do right under all circumstances, genuine brotherliness, are the great foundation-stones of manhood. We know that these are of just the same value in a poor man as in a rich man, are of just as much value in one who has a commonplace, ordinary position as in one who has an exalted place of great influence and power. We know very well that these great fundamentals of noble character weigh just as much in heaven's scales when they are found in a man who has been unfortunate and unsuc-

cessful in the ordinary avocations where men seek success, as when found in those who have reached the highest round of the ladder in their business or profession. But how hard it is to hold ourselves to that kind of judgment! If we have had a little measure of success, and have pushed ourselves a little above the level of those who started out with us, how easy it is to feel that it is because of some superiority in our mental or moral caliber! The qualities by which we have won seem to be of a finer type than in the days of our humble beginning, and they seem to be of a much higher grade than those of our competitors in the race who have not gotten along so fast.

Mr. Beecher, speaking of self-conceit in morals, says that there are those who are scrupulous in attaining good morals and refinement, but who convert that which they attain in these directions into selfishness. They take themselves, by their culture and refinement, out of the fundamental elements of sympathy and love which are indispensable to Christian life. As the cream abandons the milk from which it took its life, and rises to the top, and rides there, so men, because they are richer in money or culture than those round about them, rise and separate themselves, and all mankind below them they regard as skim-milk. They think they themselves are cream! How many persons there are who are not made better, but worse, by being made finer!

Refinement should make a man finer, not simply in thought and in imagination, but in sensibility, so that he can bear with people who are not fine; so

that he feels that there is a golden cord of attachment springing up between him and every man who has not been blessed with all his opportunities and privileges. It is a sad thing to see people who have been so hedged about by culturing influences that they have come to such a position, such a standard of moral living, that they would spurn an evil story, would scorn a salacious book, have no temptation to vice and crime, and yet in proportion as they have grown in culture of manhood or womanhood have become cold and exclusive and selfish. And it is very refreshing now and again to find men who have had all the opportunities to enrich and strengthen their manhood, and yet have kept their heads level in measuring themselves, and have not allowed any of the accidental things of life to separate between them and their fellows.

Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt seems to have been a man of the latter character. Although he was one of the richest men in the world, in these days when the possession of large wealth provokes envy and misrepresentation and malice, he, as has been well said, so far succeeded in disarming this spirit that thousands of men who worked on his railroads, carrying their dinner-pails with them day after day, regarded his death as a personal loss. That is the best possible tribute not only to his goodness, but to his wisdom as a man and a Christian.

Still, as has been pointed out frequently since his death, Mr. Vanderbilt never gave away anything like the sums of money which some other men of our time have given. It is interesting to note how it

happens that he succeeded in escaping the ordinary criticism and envy directed against rich men, and though he lived generously, and made no attempt not to make a display of great wealth, was regarded by the great multitudes of working people as the friend and not the enemy of wage-earners. The reason certainly must be in the fact that Mr. Vanderbilt did not "think of himself more highly than he ought to think;" that is, he did not feel that because he made a donation to a church, or the Young Men's Christian Association, or a hospital, or some other benevolence, that he was thereby released from personal duty in the matter. He did not feel that he was personally so much better than other men that he need not trouble himself with the burdens and cares of his fellows; instead, he gave himself with his money to help every good cause that touched his heart and conscience. It was that that gave him his influence with all classes of men. It costs a man who has a good many millions of dollars far less to give a hundred thousand dollars to a good cause than it does a man with ten or twelve hundred dollars a year to give a five-dollar bill. With one man it is the mere matter of writing a check and a temporary reduction of his bank account. There is no personal self-denial brought about by the gift. But with the man who gives the five dollars there is often real self-sacrifice. Now men feel that. And it does not greatly stir the people when a man worth a hundred millions gives one or two hundred thousand dollars, or even a million dollars, to benevolence. But when in addition to his money he gives his time and thought

and comfort to promote the causes he has at heart, just the same as though he were a poor man and had nothing else to give, he gets hold of men's hearts. Mr. Vanderbilt made the young men's railroad work his personal care, and when the working men on the trains came to know and feel this, they responded to it; they felt the difference between the man who was a mere signer of checks and a fellow-man with a brotherly head and heart.

Helen Gould has caught the affections of the people in the same way. Helen Gould sending a ship-load of provision to feed the sick and wounded soldiers, or sending a car-load of lemons for the hospitals, or giving a hundred thousand dollars to the Government, might have been a ten-days' admiration; but Helen Gould following these things with her own person, nursing the sick, caring for the wounded at the loss of her own comfort, showing that she did not think of herself "more highly than she ought to think," that she did not for a moment consider that because she had large wealth she was too great or too good to nurse sick soldiers, is what caught the heart of America, and made her one of the best beloved women in the land to-day, while many other people who have given more money than she have won only hate in return.

There is always the peril that we will judge ourselves by our best moods, and estimate our value by them, leaving out the off-days and the weak spots in our character. Many people judge themselves by the apples on the top of the barrel. The tricky farmer puts up his barrel of apples with the best

apples on the top; the windfalls and the rotten and worm-eaten ones are hidden out of sight of the purchaser; but he comes upon them when he eats his way into the barrel. We are in danger of judging ourselves in the same way. But that is a very unwise method of judgment. It is the weak spot, the place of our infirmity, that we need to take wise account of, for only in so doing can we be sure the strain will not come at that point.

If the man who is hauling logs knows that there is one link in his chain that is not as strong as the others, it may be possible for him to so adjust the chain that the heavy strain of the load will never come on that link; so you see that the old proverb which we so often use, "A chain is no stronger than its weakest link," may not always be true, and, indeed, it is never true if the load is wisely adjusted with reference to it. But if a man in a spirit of bravado treats the weak link as though it were as strong as any of the rest, and puts the strain on it, then the strong links are at its mercy. And that is one of the perils of egotism. If a man or a woman judges of his or her abilities and character humbly and reverently, reference will be had to "the sin which doth so easily beset," and the temptation which may prove too strong will not be hastily encountered.

Another peril of egotism arises from the fact that we often measure ourselves with reference to this world only. We regard ourselves prosperous because we are prosperous animals, and do not take into consideration that we are travelers for both worlds, and are not strong unless we are strong for

eternity as well as for time. We are not rich unless we have wealth that none of the misfortunes of this life can bankrupt. How often our measurement of health and strength and success and riches has reference only to this present life, which is so transitory, and has no sober judgment pointing to that endless life which we are so rapidly approaching! It is all right to lay up something for a rainy day here, but have you a letter of credit for the pilgrimage for which all this life is only a preparation?

A traveler in Oriental lands was greatly impressed with the generosity and unselfishness of his dragoman. And one day he asked him why he gave away so large a portion of his income to the poor. The man was silent for a time, and then told him his story.

He said he was living in Damascus, and it was the last day of the month of Ramadan. It was the time of the fast, and it had been a hard fast to keep that year, and he praised Allah that the thirty days were almost past. He came from the great mosque where he had been at his devotions. At a street corner there sat a beggar, an old man, whom he had seen there a thousand times before. The beggar did not cry out to him for alms, for he knew that it would be useless, because he was so selfish and stingy. But the old man looked up at him as he passed, and his look was more pitiful and appealing than ever. He knew that the beggar was a good Moslem; that he, too, had fasted—and what is a beggar's fast? He was weak and lifeless now.

The dragoman was thinking of to-morrow. For three days he had done little else than enjoy in antici-

pation the feast that was to be his on the morrow—the pot of boiled goat's flesh, the great loaf of bread, the cheese, the fruit! He was poor, almost a beggar himself; but hid away in his girdle was a piece of gold, not large indeed—only a five-and-twenty piaster piece—but it would pay for all these things and provide another feast or two. And the old man there? Would he break his fast upon the morrow? It was doubtful.

After he had gone on his way a dozen steps or so, he stopped and took out his piece of money. In the light of the fading day it looked very bright and yellow. He fondled it for a moment; he thought again of the morrow's feast into which it was to be converted. Then the prophet's teaching came to his mind: "Prayer, fasting, alms—prayer will carry you half-way to God, fasting will bring you to the door of his palace, and alms will gain you admittance." He had prayed, he had fasted; he looked back at the old beggar. The beggar was hungry; but so was the dragoman—yet he was young and strong. Alms? Paradise? He went and placed his gold-piece in the beggar's hand, and did not wait to hear the blessings which the old man besought Allah to send upon him.

The next day the dragoman went hungry. He had no feast and little food of any kind, and a weary going to and fro about the city in the hot sun, in a fruitless search for friends, after all that month of fasting, brought on an illness long and severe.

He lay, poorly cared for, in the shelter of the camel shed. And one night, when he was neither asleep nor awake, he was transported thither where

the prophet is; he saw him, and Moses, and all the retinue of glorified ones; but the glory of Allah was so great that he saw him not. The splendor of the pearls and robes of silk, the charm of the groves and fountains, were all indescribable. But more wonderful and strange than the other objects which he saw there in paradise was a pillar of gold, pure, burnished, splendid; words of the Koran were engraved in exquisite letters on its seven faces; it reflected the light of Allah's countenance over all that quarter of heaven where it stood; it was a way-mark and shrine for the beatified who passed. He judged it to be the heavenly memorial of some good caliph or illustrious soldier; but when he made inquiry one of the prophet's celestial messengers whispered into his ear, "No; it is but the tiny gold coin which you gave to the old beggar the other evening there in the streets of Damascus. Thus great and beautiful do the good deeds of the world-life become here in Paradise."

And that was the explanation of the dragoman's generous, brotherly life. He had come back from his vision; recovered from his sickness; but in all the years afterwards he had been trying to raise higher and to make more splendid his pillar of gold in Paradise.

Christ has given us a more wonderful vision than that in the picture of those who shall be blessed and crowned because of their ministry to him, who in answer to their astonished inquiry shall hear, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

XI

The Harness of Life

"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."—1 KINGS XX, 11.

LIFE in this world can only be carried on successfully at the cost of constant struggle. It is not a picnic; it is not a holiday excursion. I do not mean to say that picnics and holiday excursions do not have their proper place in the round of every year's life. I believe that they do, and that healthy human life can not be carried on without them. But, speaking of life as a whole, the wise observer must regard it as a struggle. There are burdens to be carried; there are loads to pull; there are battles to fight.

In such a world and under such conditions harness becomes a necessity; and the more mettlesome and sensitively earnest the quality of the man or woman, the more the harness becomes important. A pair of oxen need no harness save the wooden yoke; the heavy lethargy characteristic of their temper does not require anything more complex. But no man ever thought of hitching a pair of Kentucky thoroughbreds from the blue grass pastures into an ox-yoke! The harness for them must com-

prise the most skillful bit and rein and the most carefully adjusted mechanism, so that the high-mettled steeds shall have at once a sense of freedom and the perfect consciousness of mastery on the part of the driver. The harness must not chafe, but it must hold under all circumstances.

The harness of life, when applied to men and women, is well illustrated by that. Human beings, with all the possibilities of sensitive human hearts, pulsating with hope and fear, capable of faith and love, swept by every breath of fancy, yet capable of being controlled by discipline and purpose, need to look well to the harness if they are to do their best work in the world.

The physical and intellectual conditions under which we work every day may be fairly considered as a part of the harness of life. Many good people fail of doing good work in the world because they do not pay sufficient attention to what they consider the little details of life. In a profound article in the London *Spectator* on the value of John Wesley's work to England, the writer includes in his tribute to Wesley this sentence, "He carried into his religion a fine instinct for the 'minor moralities of life.'" That means, when you translate it into the thought which we are considering, that John Wesley was not only a great man, but a practical man, who knew that the harness of life, comprising many little things, was important in the great results to be attained.

Many people fail to be forceful characters because they do not yield easily to harness. A little

child, looking frankly into the face of a stiff-necked man, said, "You walk like a statue that goes by machinery." And there are many people who try to do their best work in that way. They wear the harness of life under protest. They feel humiliated that they should have to pay attention to little things.

But we have no right to feel that way. Joy is the proper harness in which a man must do his work; and joy comes, not from attention to the great things, but to the little things. A recent writer says with graphic force, "We find joy, not when we seek it, but when we are ready for it." It is a condition of inward health, of natural and acquired buoyancy of spirit, openness of heart and mind to those influences that make for joy. It is in experiences the most trivial, in ordinary occasions that are commonplace, that we shall find our highest moments of joy. This ought to prove to us that joy is not in the world outside of us, but in the trusting and confiding spirit with which we yield ourselves to the natural harness of life.

You may easily prove this to be true by noting in your own experience that the happiness or misery which has come to you has usually resulted from circumstances that were in themselves of no great importance, and that you have never been happy or contented a single day save when you were willing to find pleasure in little things.

Some people think it an indication of greatness to be indifferent to what they eat or wear, or to

the other incidents of every-day life. Yet these things have their place of real importance, and we have all found that the people who enjoy their dinner are usually pleasanter people to get along with than the dyspeptic. To think wisely and prudently about the physical life, so that the body may be well nourished and made comfortable and attractive, is to add to the ease with which the harness fits in our every-day existence.

Then there is the social harness. The world has for us no greater pleasure than that of the sympathy of our fellow-beings, and no sweeter joy than the privilege of sharing our happiness and our toil with them. One never divides a pleasure by sharing it with his neighbor or friend; he rather multiplies it. The social harness has an immense deal to do with our successful work in life. Many a man with mediocre ability has performed wonders because the harness in home and business and church fitted easily and he was able to give his full force to bringing about the results upon which his heart was set. Many another man of great gifts, capable of giving the world supreme help, has had his work crippled and marred from the chafing of the harness on the social side of his life. This fact ought to make us careful in our attitude toward our fellow-workers. It is easy for us either to exasperate and chafe or to inspire and encourage those who toil at our side. We ought not to criticise the good men and women who are doing, on the whole, faithful work for God and humanity, simply because they

do not do their work in our way. Dr. George Horr gives utterance to what all of us have experienced in the sense of exasperation that arises when something we have executed is criticised and condemned for defects of detail, while the general purpose and effect of the performance are entirely disregarded. What though our brother has failed in some minor points, if the great scope of his work is wholesome and good? Let us cheer him on to better things rather than discourage him by harsh criticism. There may be false rhymes in a majestic poem; the great orator may mispronounce a word or two; there may be imperfect stones in a noble spire—but what flagrant injustice it would be to judge a poem or a sermon or a temple on the basis of these defects! I am sure that much of the sorrow of home life comes from unreasonable criticism that ought never to be uttered. Sensitive children are often conscious that what they do is estimated by trivial and incidental defects, and not by the honest and true purpose which they have in mind. All this applies with special interest to Church work, where the motive counts for everything and where confidence and generous appreciation are the only harness that will enable us to pull our heaviest loads and achieve our greatest victories.

A further thought about working in harness, which I think very helpful, is that it suggests a steadiness of purpose. It means a life harnessed down to patient, honest work, doing duty bravely day by day. Dr. Cuyler has recently said—what

I would like to hope and believe is not true, but which I fear has much to sustain it—that this is not peculiarly an age of heroic Christianity. There is more pulp than pluck in the average Christian professor when self-denial is required. The men and women who not only rejoice in doing their duty for Christ, but even rejoice in overcoming uncomfortable obstacles in the doing of it, are quite too scarce. The piety that is most needed is a piety that will stand a pinch—a piety that would rather eat an honest crust than fare sumptuously on fraud; a piety that works up-stream against currents; a piety that sets its face like a flint in the straight, narrow road of righteousness, and pulls steadily in duty's harness.

The Church and the world need men and women who are good—good all around, on all sides. As another has well put it, what some people need is not more religion so much as greater application of what they already have, and such a distribution of it over the whole character as to give the life symmetry and strength. A man is always in a bad case when his religion does not seem to fit him. When a man's religion fits him like a harness, there will be no waste of power. An inventor was recently talking about electric conduits. During the conversation he said: "Do you know that great power-house of the traction company on the avenue? Well, the manager will tell you that forty per cent of the electricity generated there is lost because of imperfect conduits. Think of that for prodigious

waste! Almost half of the product of that great plant counts for nothing!" It is perfectly natural for the inventor to grow emphatic over that excessive waste of energy. But does it not suggest a similar waste of greater, more important power in the work of the Christian Church? The power of God's Spirit often fails of its purpose among men because it leaks out by the way when your life and mine become worldly and prove imperfect conduits through which heaven seeks to reach our fellow-men.

We can only get this high sense of duty, in which we shall work steadily in the Christian harness, through a close fellowship and communion with God. I have just come from the mountains of New Hampshire, where for many weeks the old granite hills have been almost entirely without rain, and some of the brooks are now dried up and barren which in previous summers, when I have visited them, have bubbled and dashed about the rocks and babbled their sweetest music; but up on the mountain the wells that were dug deep in the hillside gush forth their cool treasures as abundantly as of yore. These wells are full of refreshment because they tap the great reservoir in the heart of the mountain. They do not dry up, because they are in hidden communion with the secret treasuries that God has stored up against drouth. The secret of a life ever fresh and abundant, standing faithful in the midst of discouragement, abounding in enthusiasm and courage when others are yielding to disappointment and defeat,

is the secret of hidden communion with God, the drawing on the reserve in the secret places of the Most High.

But let us never forget that duty's harness must be adorned with love to give it the highest usefulness and achievement. "When you bait your hook with your heart," says John Burroughs, "the fish always bite." When we do duty, not grimly, not in the spirit of a stoic, but in the gentle, loving spirit of Jesus Christ, we get a hold on men's hearts, and are able to help them; and that is a lesson, not for the pulpit only, but also for the pew.

A young preacher went straight from college to a rough town on the frontier, and for seven years worked there to win the town to Christ. He gave himself in unselfish love to win rough men to the beauty and nobility of the Savior. He was not a great preacher, judged by the world's standard of oratory; but he baited his hook with his heart, and under his ministry wicked men and women were transformed into saints.

After seven years of work his health failed, and he underwent a critical operation, which left him in the borderland for a week. With his wife and two little ones watching the fight for life, this hero of faith was determined to do his part to live if it were God's will, and the whole town listened for hourly tidings.

Then the physician said, "He is gone." But he came back, and when he could speak, he said, "Well, doctor, I guess it is not so very far to the kingdom now, is it?"

He asked for his family, to say the last words. As the news spread that he was saying farewell to his friends, business men and others—many not Christians, some not even church-goers—came, begging to see him. As fast as the physician would let them into the room they stood by his bed and wept while he gave each one a grasp of the hand and a kind word to fit his spiritual need.

A Jew, an old merchant, with whom he had talked many a time on religion, came and said: "I love that man. Can I bid him good-bye?"

The dying pastor grasped his hand warmly. "Well, Brother Katsky, my sojourn here is about ended. It has not been so long as your people were on the way to the promised land, but I shall soon see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the great good men of the earth, and in the midst of them all, and the theme of all their songs, I shall see Jesus Christ, the Crucified One."

So this man—Empson Cory—who had given himself in abandon to love's easy harness in work for Jesus Christ, put off the harness at last with great joy and blessing.

We are living now in the day of struggle. God gives us times of rejoicing by the way, but the great time of rejoicing will come when we put off the harness of earth, because the battles have been fought and the victories have been won.

As I came down through New Hampshire the other day, I saw at some of the towns a unique sight. The governor had issued a proclamation set-

ting apart what he called "Old Home Week," during which those who had gone forth from the State into different parts of the world to fulfill their life's career should be specially invited to come back and meet in joyous reunion in the old home. And so at some of the railroad stations there were bands of music, with flying flags and crowds in holiday dress, and smiling, joyous, though often tearful faces, to meet the throngs returning by train for the happy festal occasion. In the train with me were two men who were brothers, who had gone forth in their boyhood from an old New Hampshire home, determined to do and dare their best for an honorable place in the world's life. They had both been successful: one of them was an associate judge on the supreme bench of his State, and the other was chief-justice of another State. And these gray-haired brothers, full of honors, talked to me with shining eyes of the joy of "Old Home Week." I could not but be glad for them and appreciate what such an occasion must mean to them to thus come back, with their noble honors like wreaths upon their brow, to the old fireside, where love and kindness nourished the ambitions of their boyhood.

But that is only a faint and imperfect illustration of what is coming after awhile, when all the struggles of life are over and the choruses of angels shall lead the music as the veteran soldiers of earth shall put off their harness amid the blazing light of the great white throne. Let us "thank God and take courage." We shall often have to walk by faith,

and not by sight; but let us trust God and wear with patience the loving harness which Christ himself has worn before us. Let us join with the poet in singing:

"I can not see, with my small human sight,
Why God should lead this way or that for me;
I only know he saith, 'Child, follow me;'
But I can trust.

I know not why my path should be at times
So straitly hedged, so strongly barred before;
I only know God could keep wide the door;
But I can trust.

I find no answer, often, when beset
With questions fierce and subtle on my way,
And often have but strength to faintly pray;
But I can trust.

I often wonder, as with trembling hand
I cast the seed along the furrowed ground,
If ripened fruit will in my life be found;
But I can trust.

I can not know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its wrath;
But this I know—God watches all my path,
And I can trust.

I may not draw aside the mystic veil
That hides the unknown future from my sight;
Nor know if for me waits the dark or light;
But I can trust.

I have no power to look across the tide,
To see, while here, the land beyond the river;
But this I know, I shall be God's forever;
So I can trust."

XII

The Strands of Heaven's Cable

"Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—MATTHEW VII, 7.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you."—LUKE VI, 38.

HERE are three strands, given us by Jesus Christ himself, out of which any true heart may twist a cable that will hold amid every storm that sweeps over the sea of life. By this cable it is possible for us to pull ourselves into the heavenly harbor at last.

The first strand is, Seek. Seeking for anything suggests a definite purpose to find it. It means more than looking. People often look for things when they have not the patience or the grit to really seek after them. Seeking indicates more determination than looking. A man looks for a treasure lost, and if he does not see it soon he gives up and goes on. But when a man sets out to seek, he is like the shepherd who left the ninety and nine in the fold and went out in the darkness of the night, seeking after the one lost sheep until he found it. He is like the woman who had ten pieces of silver, and when she lost one did not look for it a moment and give up, but lighted a candle and continued to seek diligently till she found it. Seeking means dili-

gence and patience and taking time enough to find what you want.

A student asked the president of his college if he could not take a shorter course than that prescribed by the institution. "O yes," was the reply; "but that depends on what you want to make of yourself. When God wants to make an oak he takes a hundred years, but when he wants to make a squash he takes six months." Seeking means that you are going to take time to get the very best things.

Earnest seeking implies hope and faith. People seek earnestly because they expect to find. They are given nerve and courage and are buoyed up in their efforts by the prospect of the happiness that will be theirs when they find. We ought always to give ourselves the full benefit of hope in our seeking.

An old farmer complained that, although he had several barrels of good apples in his cellar at the beginning of winter, he saw on his table from fall to spring nothing but spotted and partially decayed fruit. His wife went on the principle that the worst fruit ought to be used first, and so day after day the most decayed apples were picked out to be eaten, and the best kept until the last. And so she just about kept pace with the rot in the apples. The best kept that way got to be as poor as the worst had been by the time she got to them.

A good many people act the same way in regard to hopefulness about the successes and joys of life which are to come. There are people who say, "Do not dwell on the joys of to-morrow until they come."

But that is not good wisdom. It is better to give yourself all the joy you can out of the prospect of the morrow. It will make to-day easier, and if the morrow should bring disappointment it can not rob you of the joy you have had from anticipation. To be always repressing yourself and not allowing yourself to hope is to doom yourself to a low ideal and make it pretty sure that you will not rise above it. Better have the dreams of Joseph with the nodding sheaves and bowing stars of exaggerated prophecy than to be always eating the rotten apples of pessimism. We should seek the best things, and believe they are for us. Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." As the greater includes the less, so when we seek our right relation to God we include in our finding a harmonious relation to all other things.

The second strand is, Knock. Knocking shows a purpose to get in. It means persistence. It is a certain indication of faith that there is somebody inside who can let us in.

A busy man sat in his private office. In a room adjoining, a group of his assistants were busily employed. Between was a door which no one but the great man ever used. If an employee wished to address him, there was the hall-way outside and another door guarded by an office-boy. One day a little fellow of six years rambled into the assistants' room, asked a question or two, and then walked deliberately up to the private door and pounded on it with a good, round, authoritative

knock. The great man's chief assistant looked up with an astounded expression as the unusual sound fell upon his ear. Other employees regarded the child with startled curiosity. Rap! Rap! went the little fellow. "Go around by the hall," some one suggested. "I 'll not," said the child. "My papa 'll open this door for me." Sure enough, the door soon opened, a smiling face looked forth, and a tender voice said, "Welcome, my dear!" and drew the child within. "Ah!" thought the chief assistant, remembering the text, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

The text suggests the tender relations between the human heart and God. We are not treated like servants or strangers, but as a child. He knows our knock, and we are assured that there is a welcome in his heart and love in his countenance when he hears the humblest of his children knocking for admittance. With infinite tenderness, Christ urges the same illustration when he tells of his own seeking after our souls. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Then there is a finding and a rejoicing.

When a man finds what he has been seeking after, he knows it by experience; and so there is a joyous experience when a seeking Christ who is knocking at the door of the heart finds a repenting sinner who is knocking at the door of mercy. The glory of Christianity, its supreme joy, is the rapture of the opened door and the feast of soul inside, which every Chris-

tian knows for himself. It was that that gave such marvelous momentum to the great revival under the Wesleys and Whitefield. When John Wesley had knocked until the door was opened unto him in joyous conversion, he went down to Cornwall, a region of smugglers, where smuggled brandy encouraged the universal drunkenness. He brought to those miners and smugglers a rapturous, singing religion that shouted with gladness:

> "My God, I am thine;
> What a comfort divine;
> What a blessing to know
> That my Jesus is mine!"

This gospel of personal experience created such consternation that men were arrested and brought before the court for claiming to be converted. Wesley asked one aristocratic gentleman what was the charge against one of these new converts who had been thrown into jail. The answer was: "Why, the man is well enough in other things, but his impudence the gentlemen can not abide. Why, sir, he says he knows that his sins are forgiven." And for that they sent him to prison.

But sometimes they found a judge with sense. On one occasion a cart-load of these singing Christians were brought before the magistrate in the town of Epworth. "What have they done?" asked the magistrate. That was a point that had not been considered; but at last one ventured to say, "Why, they pretend to be better than other people." "Well, they had not far to go to be that. Is there nothing

else?" asked the magistrate. "Yes," says another; "they pray from morning till night." "But what else have they done?" urged the magistrate. After awhile there came a voice from the back of the court-room: "They have converted my wife. Before she went among them she had such a tongue, and now, Your Honor, she 's like a lamb!" "Carry them back, carry them back," said the magistrate, "and let them convert all the wives in the parish."

Knock until the door of mercy opens, and you will find a feast of fellowship with Christ that will be sweeter than any fellowship of earth.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you," is our third strand in the cable by which we are to be drawn to heaven. The whole world is built on that law. By giving of what we have we come into the line of still greater bestowal of God's gifts. The grateful heart that gives thanks receives still greater cause for thankfulness.

A Scotch writer gave to Hamilton W. Mabie this illustration of the source of a Scotchman's inspiration: One day in the early spring he was walking along the side of a mountain in the highlands when he came to a hut where lived an old man whom he had known for many years. The author saw the old man with his head bowed and his bonnet in his hand.

He waited a little on coming up, and said to him after a bit, "I did not speak to you, Sandy, because I thought you might be at your prayers."

"Well, not exactly that," said the old man; "but I will tell you what I was doing. Every morning for forty years I have taken off my bonnet here to the beauty of the world."

How impossible it would be for a man to give forth such gratitude without receiving from God large powers of appreciation.

If we give God our loving service unstintedly, he will give back to us good measure, running over, more than we can conceive. Rev. Charles Garrett, the great Liverpool city missionary, speaking about the true glory of Christ's Gospel, says that he knows a lot of good people who want to be Jews again. They want to make the details so sharp that one may know exactly. "Show me where God says it." "If I ask a man to be a teetotaler, he says, 'Show me where God commands it.'" But love does not want commands; it only wants opportunities.

The Pharisees knew the law. They knew exactly —to quote what one of the quack advertisements says—what to eat, drink, and avoid. They knew just how far they might go on a Sunday and where they must stop; and when they had broken the law they knew just the value of the sacrifice they had to offer. It was like a kind of time-table. They knew exactly where they were. But we are under love—glorious, Godlike love. Love has a wider sweep than law. Love gives unmeasured. There is no overtime with love.

There is nothing too little for love to notice. The mother sees the little tiny scratch on the child's hand that most people would overlook; but she sees it and kisses the place to make it well. A little thing? It is not little to her. It affects her child.

And, on the other hand, there is nothing too great for love to undertake. Love knows no such thing as impossibility. In the coal-mines in Lanca-

shire a coal-pit shelved in. The crowds gathered around, clearing away the mass of earth to get at the men at work beneath. In the midst of all their toil a stalwart, gray-bearded old man strode up to them and said, "Get out of the road," and seizing a pick, commenced working with the strength of ten men. The sweat was soon streaming down his brawny face, and somebody said, "Let me have the pick." "Get out of the way," he cried, "I have two boys down there."

That is what love does. A man working for wages is a very different being from the man who is working for love. And you show me a Christian man that is working for love without stint, giving of time and money and service to help forward Christ's kingdom and bless his fellow-men, and I will show you one to whom God is giving overflowing blessing in return.

This is the true secret of joy in human living. Give comfort and joy, and it will be given back to you in larger measure. Service, not self-indulgence, is the key into God's great storehouse. Josephine Troup sings for us an old Eastern legend that emphasizes this truth:

"A certain wise man, deeply versed
In all the learning of the East,
Grew tired in spirit, and athirst
From life to be released.

So to Eliab, holy man
Of God, he came: 'Ah, give me, friend,
The herb of death, that now the span
Of my vain life may end.'

Eliab gently answered: 'Ere
Thy soul may free itself indeed,
This herb of healing thou must bear
To seven men in need.

'When thou hast lightened each man's grie,
And brought him hope and joy again,
Return; nor shalt thou seek relief
At Allah's hands in vain.'

The wise man sighed, but humbly said:
'As Allah willeth, so is best.'
And with the healing herb he sped
Away upon his quest.

And, as he journeyed on, intent
To serve the sorrowing in the land,
On deeds of love and mercy bent,
The herb bloomed in his hand;

And through his pulses shot a fire
Of strength and hope and happiness;
His heart leaped with a glad desire
To live and serve and bless.

Lord of all earthly woe and weal,
Be this, life's flower, forever mine!
To love, to comfort, and to heal—
Therein is life divine!"

XIII

The Face of Jesus Christ

"The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."—2 CORINTHIANS IV, 6.

THE traveler in foreign countries, especially in the old historic countries of Europe, finds great interest in the portrait galleries, not only in the museums of art and history, but in the more private galleries in great castles, where, on canvas, often old and faded, is preserved the ancestral line of some great and historic house.

The Bible may well be compared to a portrait gallery. We have preserved in its books sketches which give a very vivid idea of the vital and earnest leaders of our race. How splendid are the pictures that look down upon us from the walls as we wander through these great rooms of the Bible! There is Adam in his loneliness; Eve in her dialogue with the devil; Cain flying from his slain brother; Abraham welcoming the angels at his tent-door; Daniel in the den of lions; his fellow-exiles in the fiery furnace; Joseph coming down from the throne to greet his brethren; Moses, the rugged lawgiver; David with his harp, at once the king, the poet, and the musician. And so, on and on, we might wander

without limit. In the Vatican at Rome, the largest of all earth's art-galleries, there are eleven thousand rooms, and one may wander for days with walls of speaking pictures and statuary on either side. But the Bible is a greater portrait gallery than that, and all its portraits lose their splendor in the greater glory of the face of Jesus Christ.

The thought which I wish to emphasize is that we are all being judged—indeed, we are judging ourselves—by what we see in the face of Christ. People do not always see the same things in the face of Jesus. When Christ hung upon the cross, one of the thieves who was crucified with him saw in his face only the misery and pain of a man dying like himself, for his sins. He saw nothing to convince him that Christ was not a humbug and a fraud, and died mocking him and railing at him. The other thief, who was dying the same cruel death, saw in the face of Jesus Christ the beauty and majesty of a Divine Savior, and was so impressed with what he saw that he prayed for mercy, and his sins were forgiven.

During his earthly life a great many people saw tenderness in the face of Jesus Christ. If you follow along in his footsteps, I think you will be greatly impressed with the number of people who found tenderness and compassion in his face. One of them was a poor woman who had been sick for a dozen years and had hunted up all the expert physicians until she had spent all her living trying to get cured; but she was no better, and had given up all hope of being better until she heard the wonderful rumors

about the cures Christ had performed. Then, one day, when he passed through her town, though he was on the way to see the daughter of the richest man in the place, and a great crowd was about him, this poor woman rushed from her home and followed after him through the streets. She no doubt felt that this was her only chance, so she elbowed her way through the crowd behind him until she got near enough to pluck the hem of his garment in her fingers, and she was healed.

Christ might have gone on, satisfied with having healed her. Some people would say, Surely that was enough to do for the poor thing. But that never was Christ's way. He not only went about doing good, but he did his good deeds in a beautiful, lovely way. And so he turned about and held a conversation with the woman right there in the crowd, and gave her a new self-respect and courage and happiness by permitting her to look into his tender, loving face.

I would to God that every one of us seeking to follow Christ could look into his face until we get that tenderness reflected perfectly in our own. Tenderness is by no means appreciated as it ought to be. As Dr. Meyer justly says, far too many people think that tenderness implies softness or weakness. But that is a great mistake. Only very strong natures can be really tender. Some years ago I saw one of those great steam-hammers that weigh ever so many tons made to crack a filbert without hurting the kernel. So the glorious strength of Jesus Christ permeating our human nature will give us

strength to repress the irritable and aggravating word, to refrain from the hasty and impulsive act, and to stay in our rush long enough to do kind things in a kind and gentle manner. How many a well-meant deed is spoiled by the roughness and heartlessness of its doing! The apple of gold is set in a picture of dirty wood. It is like reading Milton or Dante in a ragged, soiled binding. But as only a rich man can afford to have splendid frames for all his pictures, so only a rich and glorious soul can give the best things in the best style. The glory of it is that the best things and the best style in the higher and spiritual realm are within the reach of every one of us. How foolish we are when we do not frame a kind act or a generous deed in the rich beauty of tenderness!

Zacchæus saw hope in the face of Jesus. Zacchæus was a very unpopular man, and deserved to be; for he had been dishonest and mean in his dealings. But no man is all bad; and there was a great vein of gold in Zacchæus that made his mean wrong-doing seem loathsome to him, and he longed to be a better man than he was. Yet so long had people treated him as though he were a scoundrel that he had almost lost hope of being anything better until he looked in the face of Jesus Christ. One day he heard that Jesus was coming to town, and, being a little man, he pocketed his pride and climbed up on to the first limb of a tree, in order to make sure of catching sight of his face. When Jesus came along, he looked up and caught sight of the anxious gaze of Zacchæus. The Master stopped and looked

at him. No one had ever looked at Zacchæus like that before. In the Savior's face was something which stirred his hope. Something in that look not only made Zacchæus believe that goodness was worth what it costs, but made him dare to believe that goodness was possible to him. And when Jesus, giving him that hopeful look, told him to come down and lead the way home, for he should be his guest, Zacchæus slid out of that tree the happiest and most hopeful man in town. As he went home, conversing with Jesus and looking into his face, his hope grew on him until by the time he got to the house he had made up his mind what he would do, and the first minute he was alone with the Lord he cried out, "The half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

The world needs to see the hope in the face of Jesus Christ. We Christians ought to carry the hopefulness of Jesus to those who have been made to despair by sin. John B. Gough was staggering on his way to a drunkard's grave when a man who had gotten into his heart the goodness and gentleness of Jesus touched him on the shoulder one day, and when Gough turned rudely around he looked into a face so tender and heard words and saw a countenance so full of hope that he began right there to conquer his awful appetite and climb back towards sobriety and honor.

The late Dr. Charles A. Berry used to tell how he was converted to preaching more fully the hope

there is for a poor sinner in the Divine atonement made by Jesus Christ. One evening as he was writing a sermon for the next Sunday, a young woman was ushered into his presence, who sobbed out a request that he would go and "get her mother in." "Get her in, sir! Get her in!" The girl seemed to think that her mother, who was dying, could be got into heaven by the preacher. He went to the house. It was a place kept for immoral purposes, where many a poor girl had walked the burning path of shame and ruin. The woman was in great horror as the sins of her wicked life crowded upon her conscience. How could she escape? Dr. Berry felt himself quite at a loss what to do or say. His theories utterly failed him. To set before her the beautiful example of the holy Jesus, and to urge her to imitate him, was useless; for she was dying, with a vast load of guilt upon her conscience, with nothing to relieve her fears of "the wrath to come." To exhort her to amend her ways and cast off her sins by righteousness was equally unavailing; for she had but a few hours before she would have to take her stand before the Judge. In this emergency he felt that there was nothing that could save her but faith in the all-atoning blood of Jesus. And so he fell back on that great promise which Christ himself used in talking to Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The dying woman grasped the fact of God's love in giving his Son, and that

the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. She was able to see the hope in the face of Jesus. Her terror ceased and gave place to peace.

Peter saw grieved rebuke in the face of Jesus. The night when he denied his Lord, Christ looked on Peter, and there was in his face such a mingling of tenderness and grief that Peter's heart was broken, and he went out into the darkness to pour out his soul in bitter tears of repentance. Happy it was for Peter that he thus purged his soul of his sin; for the next time he saw Christ there was forgiveness and love and sweet satisfaction in his face. We ought to be careful to keep clear in our heart's vision the face of Jesus as our loving Lord.

When the order to clear for action was given in Dewey's fleet on that memorable May morning in Manila Bay, one of the powder-boys hastily took off his coat, which slipped from his hand into the water. In the inside pocket was a photograph of his mother. The boy had just been looking at it, and had kissed it and restored it to what seemed to be a safe place. He asked permission to jump overboard and recover the coat, and when he was forbidden to do this, he went to the other side of the ship, leaped into the water, swam to the coat, and saved it. For disobedience he was put in irons and held for punishment. Commodore Dewey wondered why he had risked his life and disobeyed orders for the sake of a coat; for the boy had said nothing about the photograph. In answer to the Commodore's kind questions he disclosed his motive. The Commodore's eyes filled with tears, and he clasped

the boy in his arms. Orders were given that the little fellow should be released. "A boy who loves his mother enough to risk his life for her picture," said Dewey, "can not be kept in irons on this fleet."

That is the kind of feeling we ought to have about keeping clear in our mental vision the beautiful face of our Divine Savior.

We shall all look on the face of Jesus Christ again. We are assured that every eye shall see him; that even those who pierced him shall look upon him. What do you see in Christ's face now? What do you hope to see after awhile? God help us to so find tenderness and forgiveness and love in his face that, as the changing years go on, our faces shall become like his! If we are thus steadfastly pressing onward in his footsteps, we may sing with the psalmist, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

XIV

The Mirage of To-Morrow

"To-morrow shall be . . . a day great beyond measure."—ISAIAH LVI, 12 (Rev. Ver.)

WE have all read about and marveled at, if we have not observed, that strange phenomenon of nature known as the mirage. Many a traveler in the desert, surrounded only by barren sands upon which the sun beats down with blinding ferocity, has seen before his bewildered eyes, rising in the distance, a lake or a river or a spring with green grass about it and great, generous palms, with wide-reaching, cooling shade. And sometimes whole caravans have been led astray until too late for rescue by this illusive mirage of the desert.

To-morrow is to many the ever-recurring mirage of life. Many are like those who are described as giving utterance to the text—greedy and sensual drunkards and gluttons to-day, but to-morrow promising to their deluded minds something great and splendid. George H. Hubbard says that to-morrow is the day on which idle men labor and fools reform. It is the day when every man does his duty. It is the harvest-time of good intentions. The worst sinner

expects to be a saint to-morrow. To-morrow the frivolous pleasure-seeker, living to-day a flabby and useless life, will be transformed into a serious-minded, whole-souled worker for the good of humanity. To-morrow the dishonest man will be honest, the immoral man will be pure, the selfish man will be benevolent. To-morrow bad habits will be overcome, evil tempers will be conquered, wrong desires will be banished. To-morrow myriads of men and women will heed the call of Christ. To-morrow they will follow him, they will give themselves wholly to his service, they will put forth unsparing effort, they will make willing sacrifices, they will stand boldly for the right though the heavens fall, they will ally themselves with the Christian Church, and become noble workers for God and man. Cowards will be brave, time-serving politicians ripen into statesmen, triflers become manly, to-morrow. All these great things are to be done to-morrow. What a wonderful land To-morrow is!

Multitudes of people are led on with dreams of that sort through long lives. Their to-day is always mean and selfish and useless; to-morrow they expect to turn over a new leaf and be different. But their to-morrow never comes, or when it does come it is to-day; and to-day they put off doing duty, shirk their responsibilities, indulge their selfishness, excuse their indifference to the demands of God, and tolerate and coddle their sins.

All this is illustrated in the way we look at the future from the different seasons of life. Childhood

is always looking on to youth; it does not expect to accomplish much in boyhood or girlhood, but young manhood or young womanhood is to blossom into beauty and heroism. When youth comes and is in its full glow the mirage shifts onward, and then a man comforts himself by feeling that not much can be done while one is so young, but mature manhood shall have broad shoulders and strong courage and nobility of life. When that day arrives the shifting panorama looks onward to ripe old age, mellow with the autumn, gentle and sympathetic and holy when there is not much else left to do. Old age casts a glance across the river to eternity, and hopes for a heaven that may give the withered and dying plant another chance to grow and blossom.

Now the thought I wish to give emphasis to is this: The golden age of life is not in to-morrow, but in to-day. To-day and not to-morrow is the miracle-working time. Great transformations of character and spirit and conduct are possible to-day. Anything that is good to-morrow must grow out of the soil of to-day. Great opportunities and privileges coming to-morrow are of no value unless the soul has been to-day getting training and discipline that fits it for the doing of noble deeds. Many people make the great blunder of delaying their training for great deeds, while still cherishing the ambition that they will some time fill a larger sphere. They think that when the time comes they will rise to the emergency. But when their opportunity does come they find that their idle and useless life in humbler days has unfitted them to do the work of the larger place. James Rus-

sell Lowell sings this truth with a vigor which ought to inspire our hearts to self-discipline. He says:

> "In life's small things be resolute and great
> To keep thy muscle trained; knowest thou when fate
> Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to thee
> 'I find thee worthy; do this deed for me?'"

There could be no greater folly than for men and women to permit themselves to go tramping across the desert sands of wasted to-days, deceived by the illusion of to-morrow's mirage. Why promise yourself you will be a better man to-morrow than you are to-day? Unless to-day is being lived faithfully, there is no hope of your delivering the goods of an honest life to-morrow. Solid character to-day is the only material that you can be sure will not fail you to-morrow.

A band of Apache Indians in the Rocky Mountains captured an army paymaster's safe. It contained about seven thousand dollars in greenbacks. It weighed four hundred pounds, and locked with a combination. None of the Indians had ever examined a safe at close quarters before, but they all knew why it was hauled about from post to post, and were very anxious to get hold of the money. They first pounded off the knob with stones, thinking the door could then be pried open. It was a failure, of course, and then they tried their tomahawks on the chilled steel, hoping to cut a hole in it. They had seen iron softened by fire, and the third move was to give the safe a three-hours' roasting; but it proved to be fireproof. They threw big rocks upon it while it was still hot, and it was dented here and there, but they

were as far from the money as ever. Then they dragged it up the side of a mountain, and dropped it over a precipice two hundred feet high. They expected to see it burst open, but the only harm done was to break off one of the wheels. They left it lying where it fell for awhile, and then carried it to the river and let it soak for a whole week. It was thought that this would soften it, and great was their chagrin to find it as hard as ever. Then they tried gunpowder, but, knowing nothing of blasting, they brought about an explosion which badly burned half a dozen Indians, but did no damage to the safe. For a month the Indians worked at that safe, harder than they had ever worked at anything else in all their lives; but they failed to get inside of it, and finally tumbled it into a deep ravine and left it. Fourteen months later, after peace was made, the Government got on the track of the safe, and an ambulance and a guard were sent for it. It was found lying in the bed of a creek with a pile of driftwood around it. It was a rusty, dented, lonesome-looking old safe; but when it was brought into the fort and the door opened, it yielded up its contents without the loss of a dollar.

True character is like that: you may hurl it into any turbulent to-morrow, and know that it will hold the gold of to-day safe and sound as capital for the future. You may put character through the fires of temptation, you may stone it as they did Stephen, thrust it into the den of lions as they did Daniel, put it into the stocks as they did Paul, but it will keep its treasure secure, and bring it forth to-morrow, and the day after, to be honored of God and man.

Many men are literally living the folly spoken of in this text. They are wasting their strength, physical, mental, and moral, by the prodigality of to-day, and yet they are looking into the devil's mirage of to-morrow, expecting that when it comes they will be sober and self-masterful men.

A New Orleans business man, who had flattered himself that he was only a moderate drinker and could never be harmed by strong drink unless he became a drunkard, from which fate he felt safe, said to a friend recently that he had witnessed a little episode that morning that had haunted him ever since, and had forced him to do a good deal of thinking.

He had stepped into a bar very early to get a glass, and while it was being compounded, a middle-aged gentleman came in and asked one of the attendants to pour him out a little plain whisky. The man was carefully dressed, and had all the marks of refinement and good breeding. The bartender placed a small glass half-full of whisky at his elbow; but the instant he stretched out his hand it was evident that the man was on the verge of nervous collapse. He shook like an aspen, and when he finally managed to seize the tumbler its contents flew in every direction. "Let me assist you, Colonel," said the bartender, quietly, and, pouring out another drink, he leaned over and held it to his lips. The man said nothing, but gave him a haggard look that went to our business man's heart like a knife. What a look! Shame, humiliation, and abject animal terror. It started the sweat on the observer.

Well, the broken man drank his whisky, stood

still for a minute as if gathering himself together, and then walked out. Our friend asked the bartender if he had many such customers, and he laughed. "Lots of them," he said. "There is not a first-class bar in town," he went on, "that does n't patch up a few old boys like that every morning. They are not drunkards, but they have been at it so many years that their nerves are gone, and, although they do n't know it, they are working on absolutely nothing but whisky. As soon as they get a little fresh fuel in the morning they are all right, but they come in scared and out of their wits and thinking they are going to drop dead every minute."

The business man walked out with some new ideas.

Ah! if young men would only reflect! Think of coming to an old age like that! Think of a man deliberately wasting his nerves by strong drink and dissipation of other sorts, and then deluding himself with the devil's mirage of a mature life and an old age that shall be strong and pure and honorable! Was there ever any deception more cruel than that? And yet I meet young men every day, and there are men who hear me preach every Sunday, who are walking that very path. And they will not believe me when I say to them that the occasional drinker of to-day is the tippler of to-morrow, and the moderate drinker of to-day is the drunkard of to-morrow. They will not believe even the words of the wise man of history, though they are borne out by every day's observation on every street of the city, when he warns with solemn utterance: "Be not among wine-bibbers;

. . . for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty. . . . Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

It is the current of life which we must take into consideration. Show me a river at any given point, and I can reasonably predict what it will be a few miles down the stream. Show me your to-day, and I can judge of your to-morrow. If to-morrow is to be sweet and strong and beautiful, then to-day must be devoted to the development of the graces desired.

John Ruskin says: "The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, not before them." And that is as true of a man as of a woman. To-morrow must get to be to-day before it comes to its kingdom. To-day is the golden age of your life and mine. To-day is the garden of our career. To-day the love of God broods over our souls. To-day angels come on errands of sympathy and love to weary and tempted hearts. To-day all things are possible to him that believeth. To-day Christ is ready to bestow upon you the gift that will give you power to become a son of God. To-day the air is like magic. Breathe it with faith and courage. Act not in some to-morrow vague and illusory, but now. "To-day is the day of salvation!"

XV

The "God-Speeds" and Welcomes of Life

"And they accompanied him unto the ship."—ACTS XX, 38.

"And so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."—ACTS XXVIII, 14, 15.

OVER the doorway of the house of one of the honored members of this Church there is inscribed in large letters the phrase, "Welcome the coming and speed the parting guest." That has in it the essence of the theme upon which I wish to enlarge a little at this time. Hail and farewell are words often on our lips. It is a world of coming and going; a world of happy meetings and cruel separations; a world of welcomes that gladden the heart and make the blood leap through the veins, the smiles flush the cheek; a world full of good-byes that cause the heart to sink, the throat to choke, the tears to wet the face, and the light of life and hope to die out of the heart.

It is for our comfort and encouragement that I have chosen this theme. It has been suggested to me very naturally by the incidents of the season, as I have said in the depot and on the dock, "Good-bye," and "God-speed," to one family after another out of our Church flock, as they have gone away to the mountains, or the woods, or the sea, seeking after

health and strength, or to visit their loved ones. These scenes of parting, and the accompanying friends to bid them "God-speed" on their way, have brought back this occasion in Paul's life, when he was going away from friends that were very dear to him, and whose hearts were deeply saddened with the thought that in all probability they would not see his face again on earth. In their love for him they went with him as far as they could. If it had been possible they would never have let him go beyond the sight of their fond eyes, beyond the reach of their clinging hands. But since he must go, they gave him this last proof of their affection and fidelity, by going with him to the ship, and standing as we do now, in the depot or on the dock, to wave the handkerchief or the hand, as the car or the ship disappears with our loved ones in the distance.

Many thoughts are suggested by this theme. First, the difference in the quality of friendship. There is a friendship which is suave and polite and entertaining when the friend is by, but which dismisses the friend with a wave of the hand and a pleasant smile, and goes on about its work or pleasure while the friend goes on his way to the ship alone. All hearts feel the difference between that and the fellowship of soul that is never satisfied with less than going to the ship.

I think very few of us make as much as we ought of friendship, and very rare is the man or woman among us who in the fitting up of character, in the cultivation of graces, takes into account as one of the high aims of life the purpose to be well fitted to be an

ideal friend. And yet friendship, the power to be a good friend, is one of the noblest characteristics of our lives. Hugh Black in his splendid book on friendship emphasizes his thought about it by calling his first chapter, "The Miracle of Friendship." And I think all thoughtful readers will agree with him that the finest feature of Rudyard Kipling's work, and it is a constant feature of it, is the comradeship between commonplace soldiers of no high moral or spiritual attainments, and yet it is the strongest force in their lives and on occasion makes heroes of them. We feel that their faithfulness to each other is almost the only point at which their souls are reached. The threefold cord of his soldiers, vulgar in mind and common in thought as they are, is a cord which we feel is not easily broken, and it is their friendship and loyalty to each other which saves them from utter vulgarity.

The Bible is enriched with many beautiful friendships, but the most beautiful of them all is the oft-studied instance of David and Jonathan. They met amid the turmoil of the battlefield, and, as Professor Black says, knew each other at their first meeting to be nearer than kindred. By some subtle elective affinity they felt that they belonged to each other. Out of all the chaos of the time and the disorder of their lives there arose for these two souls a new and beautiful world, where reigned peace and love and sweet content. It was the miracle of the death of self. Jonathan forgot his pride and David his ambition. Their friendship was the smile of God, which changed the world to them. One of them it saved

from the temptations of a squalid court, and the other from the sourness of an exile's life. Jonathan's princely soul had no room for envy or jealousy. David's frank nature rose to meet the magnanimity of his friend. In the kingdom of love there was no disparity between the king's son and the shepherd boy. Such a gift as each gave and received is not to be bought or sold. It was the fruit of the innate nobility of both; it softened and tempered a very trying time for both. Jonathan withstood his father's anger to shield his friend; David was patient with Saul for his son's sake. They agreed to be true to each other in their difficult position. Close and tender must have been the bond which had such fruit in princely generosity and mutual loyalty of soul. Fitting was the beautiful lament when David's heart was bereaved by the fall of his friend in battle at tragic Gilboa: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Love is always the most wonderful thing in the world, ever a new creation, beautiful and radiant to every loving soul. It is the miracle of spring to the cold, dull earth.

Jesus Christ puts friendship as high-water mark in the ordinary working of human life. "Greater love hath no man than this," said this expert in manhood, "that a man lay down his life for his friend." And this high-water mark has often been reached, and the most beautiful pages in human history are those which tell of the victory of love over selfishness between friends.

Make much of your friends. Go with them as far as you can in their trials and in their joys. If they must separate from you for a time, either by going to another country or by going on in advancing education or growing success, go with them at least to the ship, and let them have the memory of your fidelity and affection to inspire them on their journey.

But the other side of the shield has its message, and a joyous one. Paul had had a long, hard journey as a prisoner to Rome. He had been shipwrecked and near to drowning in the sea; flung upon a barbarous island, he had been bitten by a poisonous serpent; and at last, worn out with hard usage, and no doubt depressed and somewhat discouraged, he had landed in Italy and was on his way to Rome. The word of Christ had sifted through the country a little, and a few scattered Christians in the Eternal City heard about the landing of Paul, and knowing that he was a prisoner for his faith's sake, their Christian love inspired them to go down several miles on the way to meet Paul and give him the good cheer of knowing that he would not be without sympathy and prayerful interest in the trials that were before him. The account which Luke gives of its effect on Paul, though brief, is very beautiful. Luke says that when Paul saw these unexpected friends and heard their welcoming words of greeting, he "thanked God, and took courage."

Those of us who have traveled much, and have been away from home a good deal, know something of the added cheer after a long tiresome journey to find at the railway station or at the steamer's dock

a welcoming face and a strong grip of the hand to greet us at the journey's end. Many a time I have reached the place where I was to preach or lecture after an all-night's or an all-day's railway trip, feeling so weary and lonely and homesick that I was almost in panic for fear of disgraceful failure to do my work well, but have had all my fears dissipated by the cheering welcome of some one waiting to receive me, who in some subtle way, unconscious to himself, passed on to me his own pleasure in my coming and his own confidence in the success of the message I was to bring. Always go to meet your friends when you can. Go with your best smile, with your most cheerful thought, with sympathetic and encouraging presence; make the home-coming inspiring and prophetic of happy and successful days to come.

But surely our theme would suggest more than that. The coming of Paul's friends, so full of good cheer and welcome, nerved this brave man to new courage and filled his heart with thanksgiving to God that, however severe the struggles before him, he would not be alone, but there would be stanch friends near him on whom he could rely. Let us give our friends such comfort all along the way of life. What a blessed thing is sympathy, and how comforting are words and deeds of cheer! Appreciation is food to the truest souls. Do not imagine that any man or woman ever reaches so lofty a position, or is ever so armored in strength or so self-sufficient in resources, but that a word of good cheer, a smile of appreciation from the humblest friend on earth, is not needed or will not give blessing when received.

Men who have done great deeds have died of a broken heart by the way, with greater deeds yet, like unused arrows, in their quiver. Whenever you are in doubt about speaking words of sympathy and cheer, then speak them. Such a feeling is so precious and divine, so Christlike, and may have so much of the rich wine of hope, that you can not afford to risk some one's failing or dying for the lack of its expression.

The sweetest hope which Christ holds out to us is the welcome which shall be given to us when the sunset of our human life has come and we near the end of our earthly career. It is surely a sweet providence which makes a divine sort of homesickness take possession of the old. They long for the loved ones and the friends of their early years.

Nansen tells us that in the successful voyage of himself and friends through the Arctic Ocean, the one enemy they could not overcome was homesickness. Half of their labors and three-fourths of their amusements were to escape the clutch which threatened to stifle the heart. They celebrated the king's birthday, their own birthdays, the ship's birthday, and even the birthdays of their dogs, all to drown remembrance and stimulate happiness. Nansen confesses in his journal that there were evenings when, had they relaxed for a moment their efforts to keep up their spirits, they would have broken down in tears like children away at school. The brave-hearted explorer himself spent much time in writing in his journal dreams of home. He pictured scenes of his childhood, of his boyish sports, of his marriage, of his

baby's cunning ways. And again and again he exclaims that all the honors of the schools and all the plaudits of the world are not worth the price he pays in his isolation from his little garden, his modest cottage, and the wife and baby who there await him. In the midst of their boisterous sports these great-limbed Norsemen look into each other's eyes and grow suddenly still, for each reads in another's face what he feels in his own heart, the desperate "heim-weh" which, like some neuralgia of the heart, threatens to crush out life itself with remorseless hand.

The thought that saved these men from despair was the hope that they should again see the rugged coast of Norway and behold the welcome faces of their loved ones at home. And so with the heavenly homesickness God beckons us on toward a land that is new to us, and yet not new, because our old friends are there—those who have been faithful to us in the days of our childhood and youth; who walked arm in arm with us in our pleasures, or toiled at our side in life's struggles; who have gone with us many a time to the ship and come again with welcome to meet us, but whose ship finally called for them, and we went to the dock with hearts as heavy as the friends of Paul, who sorrowed most of all because they should see his face no more. But those friends have long since seen Paul again; and with what rapture he must have welcomed them on the heavenly shore! And so our friends whom we "have loved long since and lost awhile" shall wait to greet us as our ship comes into the harbor of heaven.

XVI

The Romance of Christianity

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—MATTHEW XXV, 40.

THE romance of Christianity centers in the fact that there is in every man or woman the possible beauty and glory of the Christ. The dictionaries give four great qualities to the romantic. One of these is that it appeals to the imagination. There is no stronger appeal made to the human imagination than that which Jesus Christ makes in this wonderful picture of the judgment. He declares that, in that dread hour when all the nations of men shall be gathered before the throne of God and the good shall be separated from the bad, those on the right hand in receiving their reward shall be addressed by their Lord in the most appreciative words, and he shall say unto them: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And then the righteous shall be filled with astonishment. All their lives they had been longing to see him, wishing they might look into his face, think-

ing how glorious it would be if they could but follow Mary's example and break their richest box of perfume on his head, craving in their humility the privilege of wetting his feet with their tears; and now to be told that they have ministered unto him in many an experience of sorrow and poverty fills them with amazement, and they cry out in their astonishment: "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" And the King makes it clear to them by saying, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Here you may find the heart of the missionary movement which has been lighting up the world for the last hundred years, and has given us the most romantic epoch of Christianity since that first century when the disciples spread over the then known world, carrying the news of the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Missionaries have gone forth not only into foreign lands, but into the neglected portions of our own country and into the slums of our great cities, putting aside the ordinary luxuries and comforts of life with all joy, and taking on themselves a thousand discomforts and burdens willingly, because they have seen in the dwarfed and stunted dweller in cellar or attic, or in the ignorant and benighted heathen, the possible Christ. As the great sculptor of old saw in the block of marble, rugged and rough and soiled, the angel

which his genius could chisel from it, so these men and women who have gone as missionaries, at home or abroad, have gone for Christ's sake, having in their minds and hearts a vision of Him who is "the One altogether lovely" which they are to bring out in reality in the rude and sinful lives to which they minister.

Here, I repeat, is the central motive of the missionary movement. Take this away, and the whole movement would collapse in a year. It is this supreme appeal of Christ to the imagination of Christian men and women. He calls on them to see in the very poorest specimens of humanity his own brethren, and he declares that so great is his love for these soiled and bruised and discouraged brothers and sisters that when we do anything for them he appreciates it and loves us for it in his heart as though we did it for him personally.

Another element of the romantic is the quality of heroism, and Christianity has that quality. Christ is the one absolutely spotless hero that ever lived. He was rich with all the glory of heaven, and he put aside his riches and came down to the poverty of earth, becoming really poor, that he might save the lost. We praise John Howard because he gave of his money and time to look after the condition of the prisoners in the jails of Europe; and rightly we call him a hero. But Jesus Christ gave up all the splendors of the skies and came down into the prison-house of the earth to save a race lost in sin, in bondage to the evil one, and gave himself, his time, his comfort, his life, that he might save them. He

did this to save men who did not care for him—to save people who abused him and even put him to death. Was there ever anything more heroic?

All the other heroes of the world who deserve the title have but reflected rays of that heroic light which radiates from Christ, who is the great central sun of heroism. And when Christianity ceases to be heroic it ceases to be Christian. The reason why many people who belong to the Church, and who are nominally Christian, get no joy or happiness out of their religion, and have no power for good in helping on Christianity in the world, is because they have lost the self-denying, heroic spirit which is the very atmosphere a Christian must breathe.

If we could find one selfish, lazy day in the life of Jesus, when he let another suffer, no matter if he were a poor leper or a blind man, because he was taking his ease and having a good time, we should find a blot on his life that would forever be unsightly. But there is no such spot. From beginning to end the life of Jesus is heroic; and it is this heroism of Christ, reflected in the life of his disciples who go about seeking to help others, that makes the Christianity of our own time romantic and powerful. It is weak only where it has ceased to be heroically Christian.

You all know about Mary Reed, the Ohio girl who, coming home from the mission field to visit her mother, found out that she was a leper, and, with a quiet faith in God and a determination to do what she could for Christ in the years she had left, deliberately separated herself from all the loved ones of earth and set her face toward India, to live

among the lepers and reveal Christ to them until God should call her home. Dr. F. B. Meyer, the great English preacher, whose spiritual addresses have been such an inspiration to many Americans, says that one of the most memorable episodes of his recent tour in India was to look into the strong, sweet face and deep-set eyes, full of holy light, of Mary Reed. The prayers of a Christian world have been going up for Mary Reed; and though she has not been healed, as was believed for awhile, she told Dr. Meyer that the disease has been "wonderfully holden." She is conscious of the hidden presence of the disease, and sometimes its external symptoms are aggravated and more noticeable. Then again they recede. But through all these experiences, of which she says—and we may well believe her—that only God knows how awful they are, Mary Reed goes on, day by day, working with lepers, most of whom are far advanced in the ravages of this most loathsome of diseases, with a cheerful face, with smiling eyes, with trusting words, and with a heart that God has enabled to say, not with a sigh, but with a song, "Thy will be done." She has these verses often on her lips:

> "No chance hath brought this ill to me;
> 'T is God's sweet will, so let it be;
> He seeth what I can not see.
>
> There is a need-be for each pain;
> And he will some day make it plain
> That earthly loss is heavenly gain."

Another element of the romantic is the marvelous. Christianity is, in this respect, the most ro-

mantic movement of all the ages. Its power to seize hold upon the hungry longings of ignorant and brutal savages and change them into saints of God, illustrating in them every noble quality known to man, is the most marvelous exhibition that the world holds.

In a speech delivered in England, Henry M. Stanley, the celebrated explorer, told the remarkable story of a missionary Bible. He said Janet Livingstone, the sister of David Livingstone, had made him a present of a richly-bound Bible. Not liking to risk it on a voyage around the Victoria Nyanza, he asked his traveling companion to lend him his somewhat torn and stained copy; and he sailed on his way to Uganda, little thinking what a revolution in Central Africa that book would make. He staid in Uganda for some time; and one day, during a morning levee, the subject of religion was broached, and he happened to strike an emotional chord in the king's heart by making a casual reference to angels. King and chiefs were moved as one man to hear more about angels. His verbal descriptions of them were not sufficient.

Finally he said to the king, "I have a Book with me which will tell you far better, not only what angels are, but what God and his blessed Son are like, to whom the angels are but ministering servants."

"Fetch it," they eagerly cried. "Fetch it now, and we will wait."

The Book was brought, and Mr. Stanley read the tenth chapter of Ezekiel and the seventh chapter

of Revelation from the ninth verse to the end; and as he read the eleventh and twelfth verses you could have heard a pin drop. And when he read the verses beginning, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," Stanley had a presentiment that Uganda would eventually be won to Christ.

He was not permitted to carry that Bible away. Mtesa never forgot the wonderful words nor the startling effect they had had on him and on his chiefs. As the explorer was turning away from his country, the king's messenger came and cried: "The Book! Mtesa wants the Book!" It was given to him. To-day the Christians number thousands in Uganda. They have proved their faith at the stake, under the knob-stick, and under torture till death.

Another element of the romantic is that of the supernatural. The truly romantic has something out of the ordinary in it. We talk of romantic love, of romantic devotion, of romantic heroism; and we always mean by it that there is something beyond the ordinary, commonplace, prosaic experiences of life in the emotion or experience which we thus characterize. In a higher sense yet Christianity is romantic, in that it is pervaded with the Spirit which is above and beyond any human power. No man, however magnetic or forceful, can do what ignorant and humble and stammering messengers of Christ have wrought when clothed upon with the power of the Holy Spirit. Those first disciples of Jesus—his circle of chosen friends—were weak, frail creatures until the living power of the Spirit of God

possessed their hearts. Peter, the strongest of them so far as human boldness and forcefulness of character are concerned, was put into a panic and denied his Lord through the sneer of a servant-girl. At the cross, in the face of the rabble and the mob, they forsook him and fled. But when, after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, they tarried in prayer and communion with God until they were clothed upon and inspired by the Holy Spirit they went forth to lead lives so brave, so self-sacrificing, so heroic, so loving, so powerful that they carried the gospel to the ends of the earth. Neither Roman power nor Grecian culture nor Jewish formalism were any match for the Holy Spirit that inspired their hearts, quickened their speech, and glowed in their faces as they told the story of their crucified, risen, and ascended Lord.

It is this romantic Christianity which I proclaim to you. It has lost none of the elements of its power or attractiveness. Christ is still making his splendid appeal to the imagination of men and women. What you do for the humblest neighbor, whether it be in your own town, in the black belt of the South, in the wigwam of the Indian, or in the larger mission-field afforded by the teeming millions of Asia, you are doing for Christ, and you may have the hope of helping to bring out the Christ in the man or woman to whom you minister. The heroism which glorified the early Church is just as possible, just as beautiful, and as surely owned of God today as in the first century. The successes that crown the effort of self-sacrificing and heroic devotion are

as marvelous in India under Bishop Thoburn, in China under Brewster, or in our home fields, where Christ-loving souls seek for the image of their Lord in ragged garments, as in any age of the world's history. The supernatural Spirit of God has not deserted the Church, but waits only for the opening of the door of our hearts, only for the surrender of our lives, to sit upon us like cloven tongues of fire and speak through us to the conviction of sin and the salvation of the soul.

Is it not true that, as I speak, some of you feel that such a religion, accepted in all its romantic fullness, would work a glorious transformation in your lives? Is it not true that many of us who have honestly been trying to be Christians, who have, it may be, carried many burdens for Christ and have known in our own lives some experience, some rewards of labor, still have come so far short of the romantic possibilities of the Christian life that we feel it would be a glorious thing if we could begin over again and give ourselves anew to Christ and to the service of his brethren? Brothers and sisters, let us pray God that we may not only be Christian, but that we may be Christian in a heroic, enthusiastic, marvelous, supernatural, romantic manner; that we may not only have the name of Jesus, but that the beauty and glory of the Master's spirit may so clothe us about that we shall give hope to the weary, courage to the faint, and salvation to the sinful.

XVII

Meshullam, the Boarding-House Roomer Who Did His Duty

"After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber."—NEHEMIAH III, 30.

THE book of Nehemiah contains a remarkably interesting story. Although he was in exile, Nehemiah was a brilliant young man who, by sheer force of personal merit, had pushed himself to the front in a strange country, until he held the highly honorable place of cupbearer to the king. He was not only a strong man, but he was a very cheerful and pleasant personality. No doubt the king liked to have him around largely on that account.

It would be a much happier world, and a much brighter one in every way, if everybody thoroughly understood how much the simple fact of personal cheerfulness adds to one's strength in accomplishing things and contributes to make us desirable personalities to others. None of us will go around hunting after sour people to deal with when we can have folks with a cheerful countenance and a hopeful personality to take their places.

One day there came to the court where Nehemiah was engaged some people from his native city

who had a very sad story to tell concerning the sorrowful condition of Jerusalem. Not only were the walls beaten down and much of the city destroyed, but, worst of all, the people were discouraged. Nehemiah was filled with grief; and despite everything he could do it showed in his face when he went before the king, and he noticed at once the contrast with Nehemiah's usual cheerful appearance, and compelled him to tell the cause of his sorrow. Prayerfully and tremblingly the young exile repeated the story that had broken his own heart. To his great pleasure and astonishment, the king sent him away to Jerusalem with an escort of troops and with abundant means to insure the possibility of his rebuilding the walls and reviving the courage and fortunes of the city of his love.

The story of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under the supervision of Nehemiah shows above everything else the power of a single earnest personality to awaken enthusiasm among a people. Nehemiah was dead in earnest. His heart was in the matter of the rehabilitation of the glory of Jerusalem. He gave his whole soul up to the work. He not only believed it could be done, but he believed that, by the help of God and the people, he could do it himself. Such earnestness is always contagious. How the world needs it now! Churches need it. It is infinitely pathetic and pitiful to see, here and there over the country, Churches where everything is dead and formal, pews only half filled, interest in the prayer-meeting and Sunday-school dying out, little or no spiritual vigor and vitality, and a general

feeling that the only hope of doing anything is to send away for some outside evangelist to come and galvanize their local conditions into life. Such a Church needs to pass through such an experience as Nehemiah had in the palace. They need some nights of agony and tears and repentance. They need to have their own preacher and their own stewards and trustees and Sunday-school teachers catch the spirit of that earnestness which makes them feel that it is better to die than that the holy cause whose name they bear should be shamed and humiliated and overthrown. There is nothing human that can compare with personal earnestness. Genius nor eloquence nor music nor wealth—none of these, nor all of these, will take the place of blood-hot earnestness.

Well, Nehemiah had earnestness. He was a preacher on fire, and the people no doubt came together at first simply out of curiosity to see the blaze. But it is dangerous business going to listen to a man really on fire if you do n't mean to become a part of the conflagration. As they listened to him they caught his spirit of shame and humiliation at their disgrace. But they caught more than that: they became inflated with his confidence in God. They began to believe, as he did, that if a thing was right and ought to be done it could be done; and they went at it. You will search a long while to find in the story of any people a more hearty, enthusiastic, and effective co-operation than was shown by these people in rebuilding the wall of their city. All thought of caste and class disappeared, as it

always does when great earnestness in an important cause possesses the hearts of the people. All the people were at work. The goldsmiths, the apothecaries, the office-holders, the blacksmiths, and the priests were all at it. To save time, and perhaps to get the added interest that would come to the work, a great many people set to work over against their own houses where they lived. In that way no time was lost in going to and from their work, and there would be a special desire in a man to make the wall strong and beautiful in front of his own home.

Now, in the midst of the record of the work done by these individual citizens I have run across a little fragment of story that is to me exceedingly interesting. Along the line of the wall on one side there was a boarding-house where they let out lodgings; and one young man whose name was Meshullam, who was the son of Berechiah, had a room in that house. Now, as a rule, the man who is simply a roomer in the house would excuse himself from taking any personal interest or holding himself personally responsible for the relation of the house to the city. He would be likely to say: "I 'm only a boarder, only a roomer, here anyhow. Let the proprietor fix up the wall; that is his business." But Meshullam seems to have been a young man of a good deal of public spirit, and so he volunteered to build up the wall in front of his room.

Only a fragment, as it is, of human story, it has in it an important and distinct message to us. It suggests the importance of remembering our respon-

sibility for personal character. We can not shift to anybody else's shoulders—not upon our landlady, or our family, or upon any one—responsibility for the individual man or woman we are. We can not personally be impure or trivial or mean without our influence being full of harm and discouragement to other people. On the other hand, we can not be pure, cheerful, courageous, wholesome personalities without being often unconsciously an inspiration and a blessing to others.

> "No stream from its source
> Flows seaward, how lonely soever its course,
> But what some land is gladdened. No star ever rose
> And set without influence somewhere. Who knows
> What earth needs from earth's lowest creatures? No life
> Can be pure in its purpose and strong in its strife,
> And all life not be purer and stronger thereby."

We have also suggested in the conduct of Meshullam the contrasting fact that people are always tempted to slacken their fidelity to duty when living in temporary surroundings, and are relieved by their situation from feeling the responsibility of permanent conditions. The man who owns his own house in a community, who has settled down to spend his life there, has a certain feeling of responsibility about his conduct from the knowledge that any false step he might take which would offend his neighbors or bring disgrace upon himself would have lasting and permanent effect upon his success and happiness. But there is a temptation to a man in a boarding-house, who is a mere roomer in the place, to feel that if things become uncomfortable

there it is easy to pack his trunk and shift to somewhere else, where he is not so well known.

I was once driving with a mayor of Boston in a remote part of the city when a little boy, ragged and barefooted, pulled his torn cap from his head of shaggy hair and said, very respectfully, "How are ye, Mr. Mayor!" The mayor turned to me with a queer smile, and said, "You see, I have to walk pretty straight because they know me so well." The remark left an impression on my mind. There is a strong wall of helpfulness in the consciousness that you are well known, that what you do will count, that to do wrong may mean great wrong, and to do good will have wide influence. Many a man is held up to his work, when under trying circumstances he is ready to faint, by the strength that comes from the consciousness that he can not fall alone, but that multitudes of others will be saddened and hurt if he fails to do his best.

But my message and the message of our theme is that, though a man is only a roomer in the place, there are important duties in front of his chamber window, duties to the people next door, duties to the people who room on the same floor, who are fellow-tenants with him at the same table; and to do these duties honestly and well is to receive the approbation of his own conscience and the approval of heaven. The tremendous success of Nehemiah came about, not because a number of people of great wealth and influence and ability gave him their patronage and help—there were none of that kind left in Jerusalem—but prosperity came again be-

cause multitudes of people like Meshullam, who had only a little cottage or a rented room in a boarding-house and could only turn to with their own physical strength and ingenuity, set to work with enthusiasm and devotion, and did the little that they could do in front of their own doors.

So it will be in the final conquests of Christianity and civilization. When that great day shall come it will be found that the world has been ransomed and redeemed, not by a few great geniuses and giants, but by a multitude of earnest souls who have builded the wall strong and true in front of their own windows. Let no man fail to speak the kind word, to do the self-denying deed, to give the handshake of good cheer because of the narrowness of his sphere of influence. God will gather together the fragments of good, of unselfishness, of beauty, and will glorify the world with them in his own good time.

There is a German story which tells of the Golden Age when the angels played with the peasant children in the sands, and from the gates of heaven, which stood wide open, a heavenly radiance descended upon the children like a gentle rain upon the earth. The people looked from earth into the open heavens. They saw the blessed ones walking among the shining stars; and the people on the earth greeted the angels up in heaven, and the angels greeted the people down on earth. But the most beautiful of all was the wonderful music which floated toward earth through the open gates of heaven. The dear God himself had written the notes and a thousand angels

played upon sweet violins and trumpets. When the first notes reached the wondering world, all things became silent. The very wind stopped its rustling among the trees, and the water in the sea and rivers stood still. But the people nodded to one another. They had such a wonderful feeling in their souls that it would be impossible to describe it to a poor human heart.

And thus it was at that time. But it did not continue long; for one day the good God, as a punishment, caused the gates of heaven to be closed, saying to his angels, "Cease your music; for I am sad." Then the angels became sad also; and each one, with his music-leaf, sat down upon a cloud and, with tiny, golden shears cut his leaf of music into separate pieces, which he let flutter down to the earth beneath. Here the wind seized the little pieces of music and blew them hither and thither like snowflakes, over mountains and valleys, and scattered them in all parts of the earth.

And the people caught them, each a piece, one person a larger piece and another a smaller one. They cherished these little pieces of music with the greatest care, and considered them very precious; for were they not portions of the heavenly music which had sounded so marvelously beautiful? But after a time there arose strife and discord among the people; for every one believed that he had gotten the best part of the music; and at last each declared that what he had was the only true celestial music, and that what the others possessed was nothing but vain show and deceit. Whoever wished to

be very wise (and there were many) made a great flourish at the beginning and at the end of his piece of music, and imagined he had something quite remarkable. One person played A, another sang B. One played in the major key and another in the minor key. No one could make out what the other was doing. In short, says the little story, it was such a noise as one might expect to hear in a village school. And thus it is to-day.

But when the end of the world comes, and mortals shall press, like children at Christmas, eagerly toward the portals of heaven, when the gates of heaven shall be opened wide, then will the dear God have all the pieces of his celestial music-book gathered up again—the great as well as the small, and even the very small pieces, upon which there is only one note—and the angels shall again unite the fragments, and the heavenly music shall be heard again, even more beautiful than before. But the people shall stand amazed and ashamed, saying one to another: "Thou hadst that! I had that! But not until now has is sounded so wonderfully beautiful. Now all the parts are together again and in their right places."

There is a vein of eternal truth in the little German story. It is only a fragment of truth, only a fragment of good, after all, that any one of us is able to comprehend or achieve. And we are to be helpful in bringing about the salvation of the world, not by claiming that the little bit of Divine melody that has fallen on our ear is the only stanza of heavenly music, but by seeking to live with such

open mind and soul that all the music of heaven shall be sweet to us, and dwelling in such fellowship with Christ that we shall have peace and harmony with all those who are seeking to learn the heavenly tunes. Thus shall we add our note to the completion of the great anthem which shall swell from a redeemed world "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

XVIII

The High Noon of Human Life

"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon."—SONG OF SOLOMON I, 7.

WHATEVER the original purpose of this unique and beautiful love song of the Bible, it abounds in pictures rarely suggestive in their teaching. The picture we are to study is the noontide, with its privileges, its burdens, and its own peculiar conditions.

We see a shepherd leading out his flock of sheep in the morning, fresh from the night's rest in the fold, for the day's feeding. They are active; and the cool air of the morning, the very exuberance of life, as well as the promptings of hunger, causes them to go rapidly forth seeking the green pasture grounds of the hills. The shepherd has thought out the day's wandering, and has in his mind the pastures where he will lead them through the feeding hours, so as to bring them at the nooning to some lofty highland, where the shade is possible, and where the fresh breeze of the mountains will cool the air and give a chance for rest until the sun is low enough in the heavens to start them on the homeward way and toward the evening fold.

Of course, the noon that I am to talk to you about is the noon of human life. Not a great deal is said about it in sermons, perhaps not so much as there ought to be. We have abundance of good advice and urgent appeals and warnings for the youth passing through the morning hours, when the bright sunshine turns the sparkling dew into diamonds, when the birds, building their nests, sing songs of the hope and the heaven that is to be—the hope of victory and the heaven of love. We have songs and sermons for the dark days and the trying experiences of defeat, as well as the great occasions of success and triumph. We have much to say about old age and gathering the sheaves for the garner at the last. But the noontime, when the sun is directly overhead, "the burden and heat of the day," when the soul longs for the shade and a chance to breathe before entering on the home-run of life—who talks about that?

One of the sweetest pictures of the Bible in portraying to us the attitude of the Divine mind toward men and women is the figure of the shepherd. In the Old Testament, God calls himself a shepherd; and Christ says no sweeter word than when he declares, "I am the Good Shepherd." Now, if a shepherd of the earth, earthy, knowing the weakness of his flock, does not forget the noontime and its burden of heat, but plans to spend it where the shade is deep, the breezes cool, and the refreshing spring not far away, surely the Shepherd God, who looks upon all these human wanderers as members of his flock, will not forget their needs, and will plan for

the noon of life—the high noon, when the burden and heat are great.

Henry Drummond tells us of two painters, each of whom painted a picture to illustrate his conception of rest. The first chose for his scene a still, lone lake among the far-off mountains. The second threw on his canvas a thundering waterfall, with a fragile birch-tree bending over the foam. At the fork of the branch, almost wet with the cataract's spray, a robin sat on its nest. The first, Drummond declared, was only stagnation, while the second was rest. Now, any rest that can come to the Christian in the noontide of middle life in a world like ours must be like that which the robin found in the midst of the spray and the thunder of a waterfall. It must be a self-composure, a peace, which comes from our consciousness of God's care and love for us and our assurance that he will not fail us in any great emergency of our lives.

An army officer says that the coolest thing he ever saw done was the act of a Western cowboy in stopping a cattle stampede. A herd of some six or eight hundred had become frightened at something, and broke away, pell mell, rushing wildly in a panic. But the herder did not get excited at all, even when he saw his herd going straight for a high bluff, where they would certainly tumble into the canyon and be killed. When a herd like that gets to going it can't stop, no matter whether the cattle rush to death or not. Those in the rear crowd those ahead, and away they go. The officer said he regarded the herd as lost; but the herder spurred up his mustang,

made a little detour, came in right in front of the herd, cut across their path at a right angle, and then galloped leisurely on the edge of that precipice, halted, and looked around at that wild mass of cattle coming right toward him. He was as cool as if carved in marble, though the officer expected to see him killed, and was so excited he could not speak. But as the officer watched he noticed that the leaders of the stampede, when they had gotten within a few hundred yards of the bluff, tried to slacken their pace, though they could not do so very quickly. But the whole herd seemed to want to stop, and by the time the rear ranks reached that point he was surprised to see them stop and commence to nibble at the grass. Then the whole herd stopped, wheeled, straggled back, and went to fighting for a chance to eat where the rear guard was. The herder had opened a big bag of salt which he had brought out from the ranch to give to the cattle, and as he galloped across the herd's course he had emptied the bag. Every animal sniffed that line of salt, and, of course, that broke up the stampede. The cowboy had staked his life on their acting in that way, and was perfectly at peace because of his faith in the success of his plan.

In the wild stampede of human life in which we are living, the only safety and peace that can come to us is the assurance that we are doing right, that we are pleasing God, and that our lives are dear to him since we are doing the work which he has given us to do.

The noontide of life has many trials and tempta-

tions peculiar to itself. The full burden of life is on our shoulders. If we are ever to do work worth doing, we feel that we must do it now; that ere the afternoon shadows come, we must bare our shoulders to carry the heaviest burdens of our lives. In this period of life we are likely to be lonely in many ways. While we were younger, through the morning years, during which we were coming to our maturity, father and mother, and older friends, have sympathized with us and defended us, relieving us, when they could, of life's heaviest loads, and cushioning our shoulders always with their sympathy and love. To the old, too, there is a compensating compassion and gentleness which, in Christian lands, good people always show to those who are beginning to feel the weakness and infirmity of age. All this the man at noon misses. If he is to be comforted it must be with something different from that which consoles either the youth or the aged. The world seems to feel that it is his hour to give sympathy, not to receive. The strength which has come to him through all the years of youth and growth must now be exerted to the help of his race and time. And in spite of all the good fellowship of life, many a man, many a woman, find the loneliest time of all their career to be the noonday of life, when they stand in the sultry heat of life's middle years, seeking bravely to carry the burdens laid upon them.

Now our study will be of no value unless we get out of it some real comfort for those who find themselves so placed. The thought I want to put into

my own heart, and into yours, is this assurance that God does not forget his children, even in the lonely noontide. He knows that the middle-aged man or woman is only a child grown tall, and that though the shoulders are broad, and the figure proud and graceful, the heart craves sympathy and fellowship such as only the deep well of Divine tenderness is full enough to grant. I think there is no time in our lives when we need to be more careful in keeping up our communion with God, and in meditating much on his goodness and love. Have you never noticed how the Lord sometimes freshens the air in the middle of the day? The morning is bright and strong and cheering, but as the day rises toward the full it comes to be sultry and oppressive. And then sometimes God gathers the thunder-storm and pours out a summer shower that settles the dust and cleanses the air, and the evening comes on sweet and fragrant, more beautiful even than the morning. So God knows how to refresh the tired heart of man. As Stopford Brooke sings:

"A little sun, a little rain,
A soft wind blowing from the west,
And woods and fields are sweet again,
And warmth within the mountain's breast.
So simple is the earth we tread,
So quick with love and life her frame,
Ten thousand years have dawned and fled,
And still her magic is the same.

A little love, a little trust,
A soft impulse, a sudden dream,
And life as dry as desert dust
Is fresher than the mountain stream.

So simple is the heart of man,
  So ready for new hope and joy,
Ten thousand years since it began
  Have left it younger than a boy."

As the shepherd, sometimes, when the heat is too great for the safety of his flock leads them into the deep shade and keeps them back from any foolish exposure to the heat, even though the silly sheep might be willing to take the risk, so God, the Shepherd of human life, many times leads us into the shade and hedges us about from the danger we would be willing to risk.

There is a large bird found in the Philippine Islands which has a peculiar way of protecting not only its little one, but the mother bird as well. The mother bird hatches out only one fledgeling at a time, instead of having a nest full, as most birds do. When it is time to lay the egg the father bird selects a hollow tree, into which the mother bird goes. The head of the house then seals up the opening of the tree with mud, leaving only a small hole through which he supplies his mate with food until the young bird is hatched and large enough to care for itself. The reason for this strange sort of care, which seems more like imprisonment, is that there are a great many snakes in the forests of these islands, which could get into the hollow tree and destroy both the mother and the young bird. Does not God often protect us in the same way? We are held back from some freedom which appeals to us. We are compelled to say with Paul, when he looked at the crooked characters made by

his pen because of the chain on his wrist, "Remember my bonds." But afterward, looking back, we find that the things which hindered us from doing what we wanted to do were truly God's wall of protection that shut us in from danger and prevented us from disaster.

In the noontide, as in the morning and evening of life, we must find our safety and our rest in God. The Psalmist in the great stress of life declared, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." We must look there too.

"We journey through lowland shadows,
Through the dull, dull mist and rain,
O, chilling the fogs and the marshes,
And the winds from the lonely plain!
And our hearts grow sick with longing
For the beautiful paths untrod,
For we know that away above us
Stretch the glad, green hills of God.

Our feet are chained to the valley,
We plow and we sow and reap;
There are strifes and toils for the noonday,
And a grave where at night we sleep.
But a something speaks within us:
'Look away from the spade and the clod,
O soul, look up for thy birthright,
And away to the hills of God!

In the winds that sweep their summits
Is healing for all thy ills;
Up, up! till thou feelest the current!
There is help, there is help in the hills.
Let darkness and sore disaster
But sunder thee from the sod,
And know thou shalt thrive in the sunlight
That crowneth the hills of God.'"

XIX

The Coin that Rings True

'When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—JOB XXIII, 10.

THE stamp of a coin is like the clothes and manners of a man. They make the introduction. If the stamp is one of a nation whose credit is good, it makes the coin welcome to us. But as, on further acquaintance, we may find a well-dressed and polite man to be a fraud and unworthy of confidence, so with a coin. It may have on it an image of Queen Victoria or of the American eagle; but if the coin is counterfeit, made of base material, then the stamp it bears can not make it valuable or desirable to us.

Some one has said, "It is the ring of a coin that attests its value, be there an emperor's or a queen's head upon it." And the same is true of character. The outer presence, the education, the manners, and incidental surroundings—these form the introduction, the stamp; but it is the ring in days of trial and struggle that tells whether the character is true.

This human life of ours is not a holiday excursion, and the coin of character must be tested under trying conditions. A counterfeit appears as good

as a real coin until you want to use it. It may weigh as much, take up just as much room in your pocket, may bear the inspection of running your fingers over it, or even of superficial investigation; but it is the ring on the counter in the day when it is your only coin, and it stands between you and hunger or need, that is the test between the true coin and the counterfeit.

So with character. Cowardice appears as good as courage in passing a review-stand. It is the smoke of the battle, the day of danger, when the ring of the human coin tells its value. Many a bully passes for a brave man until run alongside of real courage under fire; then the counterfeit shows for the ugly thing it is.

A quiet Quaker in a Western town began the publication of a weekly paper, and soon showed his colors by attacking the liquor traffic. He published the facts about some of the worst saloons and resorts, calling them "ulcers on the body of the community." He was specially marked and pointed in regard to one particular saloon. The day after the issue of the paper a big-fisted saloon-keeper came into the editor's office, and in domineering tones said, "See here, did you write this?"

The editor glanced carelessly over the column indicated and answered in a cool voice, "Yea, I did."

Then with a volley of profanity and abuse the saloon-keeper ended by saying, "Do you know that hurts my business?"

"Yea, and I am glad it does."

"You are glad it does?"

"Yea, friend, that is what I said."

For a moment the saloon-keeper was too surprised by this unexpected answer to reply. Then he said: "Well, I 'm here just to warn you that if you print any more against the liquor business in this town, we 'll make it hot for you. Now you 've had your warning, and you can take it or not."

"And supposing I do n't take it?"

"Then look out for yourself, that 's all."

"That is, thee means that personal violence will be used?" Upon this the editor took some notes on a page of paper that lay before him.

"It means that we will kick you out of the town."

"Kick you out of the town," repeated the editor, writing it down. "Good; and is that all?"

"We 'll burn your shanty over your head if you ever come back again, and tar and feather you."

"Burn shanty, tar and feather," repeated the Quaker, writing down the notes of the interview. Then looking up quietly he said, "Go on, friend, anything more?"

The bully was somewhat mystified and showed signs of weakening. The editor paused and waited. After a moment's silence the saloon-keeper growled, "We will make it hot for you."

"I think thee said that before," quietly remarked the Quaker, and laying down his pen he calmly began to sharpen a pencil.

"We mean it, too," snarled the saloon-keeper, beginning to think he had caught a Tartar.

"I am glad to hear thee speak so frankly," re-

plied the editor; and turning his chair around, he looked at the angry man with a pair of blue eyes that showed anything but fear. "But does thee know what I intend to do? I shall publish every word of this interview thee has been pleased to give me. I shall let the good citizens know that thee has threatened me and my property with violence, and if in the future any violence is done, the authorities will know upon whom they have to lay their hand. More than this, I shall tell more of the doings at thy place than I have yet told. And more; if thee comes here again to threaten me with what thee and thy comrades in sin propose to do, I will turn thee over to the authorities for trespassing on my property. Thy name is George W——. Thy saloon is at the corner of Third and Pine. Now that I have all the particulars, thee may go while I write the article."

There was an impressive silence. The cowed bully eyed the editor with baffled rage and hesitancy, but the eye of the Quaker was calm as a mirror. Then the bully, whose pretended courage was never anything more than the counterfeit of the brute, slunk downstairs and back to his den. The Quaker's courage rang true because it was built on principle and was true gold through and through.

This world of trial and temptation is God's workshop for building up true character. We are assured that character is to be tried as gold is tried. And we all know by personal observation that true character is developed, and the dross is taken away, by fidelity under hard experiences. We get strong

muscles by using faithfully the strength that we have. So the power to resist evil of any kind is strengthened every time we deny ourselves a sinful inclination or desire. Positive righteousness is strengthened in the same way. If you give yourself over to do a generous deed, stretch forth your arm to protect a weaker brother, or take the load of some fainting fellow upon your own shoulder and carry it, your generosity, your kindness of heart, your brotherliness of spirit is purged of its temptation to selfishness, and the gold of your character is purified. All the Christian graces grow by exercise; each of them is subject to the law of growth, and is strengthened by discipline.

Some one asked General Joseph Wheeler, who gained new laurels in the Spanish-American War, how it was that the sleepy farms of the South produce such whirlwind fighters in such small packages. "Well, gentlemen," said the little general, "I believe I 'll have to give you the answer an old 'cracker' woman once gave me when I asked her a similar question. Not many years ago I had occasion to make a saddle-journey through the pine barrens of Georgia, where 'most everybody is a 'cracker' and mighty shiftless. One day, however, I rode into a little community that showed such signs of thrift as to be quite out of keeping with the general character of the barrens. I rode up to a cabin where a gaunt old woman stood in the doorway, and asked her who owned these little farms that were so well kept.

" 'That farm on the left belongs to my son Jabez,'

said she, 'and the next one to my boy Zalim, and the next to my lad Jason, and the next is my boy Potiphar's place, and—'

"'Hold on, sister,' said I. 'How did you manage to raise such a fine lot of boys 'way off here in the woods?'

"'Wall, stranger,' she answered, 'I am a widdy woman, and all I had to raise 'em on was prayer and hickory, but I raised 'em powerful frequent.'"

The discipline of Providence is a good deal like that. If we yield ourselves to discipline, then the trials and hardships and struggles, and even the chastisement which God brings upon our sins and follies, develop in us the true gold of character. Many of us looking back can see where we have been thwarted and rebuked and humbled, and yet it has worked out for our good. It was bitter at the time, but it was sweeter than honey in its result. It humiliated us, but, true to the law of God in such things, humiliation was the forerunner of lifting up and exaltation. There is honor for the man who can stand being mortified and humbled and who has wisdom enough to learn thereby the lessons which God would teach him.

But possibly some discouraged man is saying, "That 's all very well if the real gold is left in you; but if you have frittered away your opportunities and your privileges, have chosen dross rather than gold, until your life is honeycombed with evil habits and your character is weakened by wrongdoing, what is there left for you then?"

There is nothing left in your own strength. Thank God, everything is for you yet, if you will bring your failure to the God who is able out of defeat to snatch victory. Bring your heart to the mercy-seat where Christ has promised to meet you, and he will turn you about, and transform your life, and give it a different ring altogether.

A commercial traveler had been living a worldly careless life. He was not a drunkard, yet he frequently took a glass with a customer to seal a sale. Sometimes he took his drink when neither customer nor sale was taken into the account. He did not count himself a gambler, yet he always carried a pack of cards in a certain corner of his grip. Finally, through a good wife's prayers and solicitations, he was converted. Then came the test of the first trip out. He knew that that trip would tell the tale whether he was to be a victorious Christian or not. He knew that he would have to run the gauntlet all the way around, and that if he was frank and straightforward in his witness for Christ he would have to stand a great deal that would be hard to bear. But he determined that the coin of his testimony for Christ should ring true on the counter of every merchant with whom he did business, and that he would take the consequences.

When he had made up his mind to that he packed his grip anew. A good many things he had had along before he now left behind. The first town he reached knew that something had happened. When he opened his grip there was no flask of liquor,

and in the corner where the well-worn deck of cards had always lain there was a small Bible. His religion had reached his grip.

The first customer laughed. "Ha, ha! Good joke! Capital!" roared he. The second customer whistled and looked quizzically at the drummer. The third customer said: "Why, my dear fellow, what 's up? Have n't turned preacher, have you?" But the drummer met them all alike. With smiling face, but with earnest, manly voice, he spoke it right out, "Boys, I 've turned around!" The fourth customer was a Christian man. He looked the drummer in the eye without saying a word and pointed to the Bible. The new convert said, slowly, but positively, "I mean it." The tears sprang to the merchant's eyes in a flash, and the two men gripped each other's hands with the warmth and tenderness of friends meeting in a strange land. Everybody found it out all along the road where he traveled. Every merchant and drummer he met respected and honored him because his earnestness and manliness rang true for Christ every time.

That is the way to be a Christian. Throw your whole heart into it. Give your whole soul up to it. It is a great thing to be an open, frank, faithful friend of Jesus Christ—to ring true to him in secret as well as in public. Let us do this, and after we have passed through all the counting-rooms and exchanges of human trial we shall come at last to the final clearing-house of the judgment-seat, and in that supreme test, when men and angels shall witness it, our coin will be found to ring true.

XX

The Three Greatest Signal Lights in History

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."—JOHN XVI, 8.

CHRIST was going from his disciples. His life on earth was nearing its close. To comfort their hearts he tells them about the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would comfort those who loved him and cheer their hearts on the way. Then he sets forth the influence and work of the Holy Spirit among men of the world generally.

He declares that the Holy Spirit will hang out three great signal lights of warning and hope to mankind. The first one is a red light, bearing testimony to the fact of sin. It will call the world's attention to sin, especially to the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. At first glance one is likely to say that that is not necessary, that the world is conscious enough of sin already; and in a certain sense that is true. But the world lacks that keen conviction of sin which causes men and women to abhor it and loathe it and turn from it to forgiveness. Sin is the cause of all the sorrow and misery in the world, and yet the world is forever trying to cure its sorrows, heal its miseries, and stanch its woes

while it leaves the sin which causes them untouched. See the sorrow that is poured out upon the earth because of the sin of liquor-selling and drunkenness. Legislatures and governments go on building hospitals and insane asylums and prisons to take care of the blighted and debauched and ruined lives, but leave untouched the sin which causes this river of distress. Surely, what the world needs more than anything else is to be convinced of sin. It seems strange that in spite of all our experience with sin we should have so little consciousness of the devilish character of it.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to pierce the drugged conscience with a new conviction of sin and to arouse the soul to its danger. Men go on in their sins because they are unconscious of the danger by which their sins surround them.

There is a story of a certain king who was never seen to laugh or smile, but in all places, among all persons, at all times, he was very pensive and sad. His queen, being much troubled at his melancholy, and being unable to discover the reason, requested a brother of his that he would ask him what was the cause of his continual sadness. He did so. The king put him off till the next day for an answer, and, in the meantime, caused a deep pit to be made, commanding his servants to fill it half full with fiery coals. He then caused an old, rotten board to be laid over the pit, and over the board, with the point downward, a two-edged sword was hung by a small, tender thread. Close by the pit a table was set, full of all manner of delicacies. His brother, com-

ing next day for an answer, was placed on the board, with four men with drawn swords about him. The best music that could be had was played before him, and the king called to him, saying: "Rejoice and be merry, O my brother! Eat, drink, and laugh; for here is pleasant being." But he replied: "O my lord king! How can I be merry, being in such danger on every side?" Then the king said: "Look how it is now with thee. So it is always with me; for if I look about me I see the great and dreadful Judge, to whom I must give an account of all my thoughts, words, and deeds, good or evil. If I look under me, I see the endless torment of despair, wherein I shall be cast if I die in my sin. If I look behind me, I see all the sins that ever I committed and the time which I have so unprofitably spent. If I look before me, I see my death approaching every day nearer and nearer. If I look on my right hand, I see my conscience accusing me of all that I have done and left undone in this world. If I look on my left hand, I see those who cry out for vengeance against me because of the wrongs I have done them. Now, then, cease to wonder why I can not rejoice at the world or anything in the world, but continue sad and heavy."

And so it would be with every man if he could see the real guilt and horror of sin without a hope of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Men close their eyes to their sins and the guilt of them, and try to absorb themselves in other things and forget about them; but nothing could be more unwise, for one does not escape from sin that

way. After all, the supreme sin is in refusing the Christ who comes to save us from all sin. No sin you have ever committed is so full of folly and guilt as the sin of rejecting Him who died to redeem you and who offers now to be your Savior.

The next signal light which the Holy Spirit holds up for us is the white light of righteousness. This shows us the life of Jesus without a spot of evil, without a stain of wrong. When a man says it is necessary to make compromises with the sins of the world, that it is impossible to live a good, pure life in this world, there is the life of Jesus confronting him. For Christ lived in our body. He bore the infirmities of our flesh. He knew what poverty was. He knew all the temptations that come to the poor man who has to work hard. He knew the meaning of loneliness and hunger and thirst and false friends and cruel enemies—in fact, he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He walked amid our common life, not holding himself aloof at all, and yet kept himself white and unspotted from the world. What a comfort there is in the whiteness of the life of Jesus Christ! for the presence of God in his life which kept him pure and clean from sin he is ready to share with us. Christ has proved that the righteous life is possible. If a man will be true to God, then God will be true to him, and nothing can withstand him. The Holy Spirit comes to convince us that the righteous life is not only the possible, but the natural life for us to live.

Hugh Latimer once preached a sermon at court in the days of Henry VIII which much displeased

the king. The irate monarch commanded that he should preach again the next Sunday and recant what he had said. So at the appointed time he came to preach, and prefaced his sermon with the following dialogue: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know to whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, Henry VIII, who can take away thy life if thou offend. Therefore take heed how thou speak a word that may displease him." Then, as if he were recalled to himself, he exclaimed again: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know from whence thou comest, upon whose message thou art sent, and who it is that is present with thee and beholdeth all thy ways? Even the great and mighty God, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell forever. Therefore look about thee, and be sure that thou deliver thy message faithfully." Then came the sermon, in which he rebuked the king's sins even more fiercely than before.

The sermon being done, the court was full of expectation and excitement as to what would be the issue of the matter. After dinner the king called for Latimer, and, with a stern countenance, asked him how he durst be so bold as to preach after that manner. He answered that duty to God and his prince had enforced him thereunto, and now he had discharged both conscience and duty in what he had spoken, and his life was in his majesty's hands. The awakened conscience of the king was for the time in supremacy, and he embraced Latimer, saying that he blessed God that he had a man in

his kingdom who dared to deal so plainly and faithfully with him.

We should all remember that our first concern is to stand right with God. It is as much our duty as it was the duty of Jesus Christ to please God; and the life of Christ in its purity and righteousness stands to-day to reprove us for our sins and to call our attention to the holy life it is possible for us to live through God's help. The righteousness of Jesus should inspire in our hearts a longing to live the same pure life. Some one has well said that a man is what he thinks he can become as well as what he thinks God estimates him as being worth. If a man thinks meanly of himself and of his possibilities, then he will go on living a mean life. But if a man thinks bravely of his own powers, then he will use them ably for ends that are true and noble. The infinite power of God which reigns supreme in the life of Jesus is within our reach, and we have the assurance that if we will repent of our sins and accept the forgiveness of Christ we shall rejoice in that Divine strength in our attempt to live the white life of righteousness.

Then there is this other signal light which tells of judgment. The Holy Spirit calls us from our forgetfulness to see clearly the great fact that though sometimes justice may seem to be thwarted or delayed, and there may seem to be no difference between the success of the good man and that of the bad man, no difference between right and wrong, no difference between good and evil, yet this is only

in seeming; for in the end there is righteous judgment.

The reason which Admiral Cervera gave for not trying to escape from Santiago Harbor at night was that the powerful searchlights from the American ships shone in the eyes of the men and made it impossible to escape unseen or even to guide their own ships aright. If those lights had been put out for a single hour, the Spanish admiral might have been able to escape. And it would not have been surprising if, in that long, wearisome waiting, some one had grown negligent of his duty, and thinking there was no use in keeping up such vigilance forever, some night the light had been allowed to go out. Human searchlights must rest as well as their keepers.

But the Holy Spirit assures us that there is turned full upon the life of every one of us a searchlight that never fails or falters, night or day, through all the years. Not a single word, action, or thought of our hearts escapes the scrutiny of that unceasing eye, and everything it sees is photographed and treasured up in the book of remembrance to confront us in judgment.

It is idle for us to suppose that we can hide any wrongdoing from the righteous judgment of God. There is an old proverb which says, "Murder will out." The philosophy of that proverb is that there is something in sin, some tell-tale element in wrongdoing, that will expose itself.

A police captain, walking from his home in

Brooklyn, being on the way to his station-house, noticed a man coming out of a yard-gate. He was carrying a bundle, but looked like an ordinary citizen going to his work. As the captain passed, the man halted a moment, resting his hand on the stone pillar at the foot of the stoop. The captain looked him over and noticed that he was well dressed; but he noticed also a suspicious circumstance—that the house was shut up as if the family were away. "What have you in the bundle?" the captain asked in a tone of polite interest. "Only some woman's clothes," was the reply. "They belong to my sister. She lives here, but she is out of town, and I am sending these things to her." This explanation seemed reasonable, but the captain asked, to make sure, "Nothing but women's clothes?" The man replied, coolly, "No, nothing else." But at that moment, as the captain was resuming his walk, a soft, mellow chime sounded from the bundle, betraying the presence of a clock. "Ah," said the captain, "women's clothes do not make that noise. You will have to come with me." Very unwillingly the man complied, and at the station-house the bundle was opened, revealing a clock and a quantity of valuable silver. Some skeleton keys and other burglar's tools completed the proof that the man was a burglar, and that the goods in his possession were stolen. That incident was illustrative of the Scripture which says, "The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."

I come to you with these three great signal lights; and I pray God that the Holy Spirit may flash upon

every guilty conscience here a keen sense of the reality and the danger of sin, and may further impress upon the soul, so that it can not be shaken off, the thought that sin must be judged. The only escape from sin is in righteousness, and the power is not in us in our own strength to free ourselves from sin and enter into righteousness.

It is reported of an ancient prince that a neighboring king used to pick quarrels with him by making impossible demands, and threatening war and ruin if these demands were not fulfilled. Among other things, he charged him to drink up the sea, which a counselor, hearing, advised him to undertake. The prince replied, "How is it possible to be accomplished?" The sage answered, "Let him first stop up all the rivers that run into the sea, which are no part of the bargain, and then you shall perform it."

Much more impossible it is for us to consume and dry up all the ocean of sin in us, so long as evil appetites and passions, like so many rivers, are feeding it. But Jesus Christ has power on earth to forgive sin. He can cleanse us from all sin at the fountain-head. He will not only forgive us the sins that are past, and take away the sting of remorse because of them, but he will inspire in us a new purpose, a new desire, so that the new life of righteousness shall fill our thoughts, our plans, and our ambitions.

XXI

Laying Hold of the Life-Line

"Lay hold on eternal life."—1 TIMOTHY VI, 12.

PAUL was getting to be an old man, and was beginning to feel the vanity and brevity of this earthly life. He knows now, as he did not in his youth, how transitory are all the sources of happiness in this short and swiftly changing panorama of life on the earth. Writing to this young man, who is very dear to him, he urges him to make no mistake, but to "lay hold on eternal life." No matter how good a hold he might get on this world, his trembling fingers must soon loose their grasp upon it; and if he is to be permanently happy, he must lay hold upon something that will not fail him, and that he will not be compelled to relinquish in passing away from this world. It is a precious thing that in the midst of all these changing scenes of earth there is this great life-line of eternal hope upon which we may lay hold, knowing that it will not break and will never fail us. Everything else will fail, but this will hold fast.

A little while ago a man who had been living in Kansas City, and who for twenty-five years had been an outspoken infidel, died, leaving a curious will.

In it his fortune of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, with the exception of only four thousand dollars, was given to religious institutions and charitable organizations under religious control. No explanation was made, but the fact was surely very significant.

One of the most brilliant infidels in this country—a man who did not boast of his infidelity or use it for money-making—once wrote a series of anonymous articles asserting his views. He told Mr. Lynn Roby Meekins, who relates the story, that one morning he had a caller, a stranger. The man came to his house, introduced himself, and with touching fervor thanked him again and again for making him see the light. He had found out who was the author of the articles. The infidel said he was greatly nonplussed, but replied as best he could that he was glad to have been of service to him. The stranger had been a worker in his Church, and was, as was discovered later, a man of influence and usefulness in the community. His excessive gratitude was embarrassing, and it reached a climax when he said, with increasing intensity, "Sir, you have converted me."

"Now," said the writer of the articles, "I have been wondering ever since what I converted him to."

He had converted him to nothing. He had left the man without anything at all to hold on to. When the Kansas City infidel with his fortune looked around, he found that infidelity did not have a single organization by which money could be used for the alleviation of suffering, for the physical salvation of

the weak, or for the material improvement of mankind. He found that Christianity was the only agency which was doing the work of organized kindness and goodness in the world, and that could be trusted with the carrying out of his better purposes. The Christian Churches have done about all that is of any benefit in the world. And so this infidel, finding that infidelity had done nothing, had nothing to do anything with, turned his dollars over to the Christian Church he had been fighting, that the money might do some good after he was gone.

The aged Christian never has to look around for something substantial and reliable as he draws near the end of life. He who has laid hold upon eternal life finds that his grasp becomes firmer as he nears the end, and that He on whom he has believed is able to keep him until the day of victory.

The figure used in the text is a very strong and vigorous one. It indicates that we should take a grasp on eternal life as earnest and determined as the hold a drowning sailor takes upon a life-line that the rescuers throw to him when he is ready to perish. With what a stern grip a man will lay hold on a line on such an occasion! He does not play with it; he gives it no half-hearted clasp, but clutches it with a grip that means life or death. Many a man has been pulled in unconscious, but his grip on the line was so set that it could not be loosened. It is something like that that Paul means when he talks about laying hold on eternal life.

The first light-house that stood on Minot's Ledge was built on huge iron pillars. The mighty waves

came between it and the rock and lifted it away, dashing it to pieces like an eggshell. The builders now leveled the ledge, and brought hardest granite, and dovetailed and riveted every course to the rock below, till nothing could shake the tower which did not shake the rock. And there it stands through all the storms, never failing to send forth its light. There is no chance for the waves to get between it and the bed-rock on which it stands. Our only safety lies in thus laying hold of Jesus Christ. Eternal life is in him. If we lay hold of Christ, riveting ourselves to him with our love and devotion, nothing can shake us loose from him.

Many make the mistake of laying hold on their own pride, and trust in their own power of will rather than in laying hold on Christ; but when the great storm comes they are without any sure anchorage.

Some months ago a man who had been living alone, taking care of a farmhouse on Long Island, was found dead in his bed. During a severe storm the neighbors noticed that there were no signs of his presence about the place, and it was supposed that the storm had caused him to go to the city. But when the brighter weather set in and he did not appear, an acquaintance forced the way into the house and found the dead body. A strange feature of the case was that there was a belt around the dead man's body which was secured by a strong cord to the post of the bed, and ropes were attached to his ankles, which were also fastened to the posts. It was thought at first that a murder had been committed; but further examination showed that the man

had tied the ropes himself. The doctors suppose that he had become very ill and had been delirious, but in one of his lucid intervals had realized his condition, and fearing that if he again lost his senses he might wander out into the storm and be frozen to death, he had tied himself to the bed, so that he could not go outside the room. It was a pathetic thing thus to deprive himself of the power to run into harm. There would have been no need for it if some friend had been at hand who could have been trusted to restrain him.

Many men and women who are sufferers from sinful habits and passions are conscious that they are in danger of disaster and ruin unless they are restrained in the hour of temptation. There is only one sure refuge, and that is to lay hold upon Him who is able to keep you from falling. To lay hold on Christ and eternal life means a letting loose of our sins and a breaking of the bondage of evil habit. In Isaiah God calls upon those who would lay hold upon righteousness and forgiveness to "loose the bands of wickedness." And we are taught in the New Testament that "if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

The railways of India had lately a curious problem to decide. It was whether a man who applied for passage from the far North to a Southern shrine should be accepted at passenger rates or charged as freight. He had heavy iron bands upon his wrists, ankles, and neck; heavy iron girdles about his chest and loins; heavy iron chains swung in festoons across his chest and back; heavy iron chains wound around

each limb, and, finally, an iron cable fastened to his waistband and terminating in a heavy iron ring, while he carried an immense iron pin and a hammer with which to drive it into the ground when he chose to stake himself out for the night. It was estimated that he carried upon his person no less than two hundred pounds of the metal, and the conclusion of the railroad authorities was that he must pay both for passage and for freightage on his chains. It proved that he was a pilgrim upon his journey to expiate his sins, and finding it would be impossible to reach on foot the shrine of his chosen intercessor with his articles of penance on, he wished to go near enough by rail to make the balance of his journey practicable. Accoutered as he was, he presented a graphic picture of the conscience burdened by its sense of sin. He was seeking in the pains of his body to atone for the sins of his soul. His burdened frame was but a picture of his heavily-weighted heart. If that man could have found Jesus Christ and laid hold on him, he could have let loose from all those burdening chains.

Are there not some who hear me who know the burdens and the chains of sin, and who need as truly as did this poor heathen to find the Christ who can free them from their sins? The tenderness of God in forgiveness, and the simplicity and completeness of it is nowhere more clearly stated than in the Old Testament statement, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions."

A boy ran to his mother one day after he had read that verse, and said: "Mother, what does God

mean when he says he blots out my sins? What is he going to do with them? I can't see how God can really blot them out and put them away. What does it mean—blot out?"

The wise mother said to the boy, "Did n't I see you yesterday writing on your slate?"

"Yes," he said.

"Well, fetch it to me."

He brought the slate.

Holding it in front of him, the mother said, "Where is what you wrote?"

"O," he said, "I rubbed it out."

"Well, where is it?"

"Why, mother, I do n't know."

"But how could you put it away if it was really there?"

"O mother, I do n't know. I know it was there, and it is gone."

"Well," she said, "that is what God means when he says, 'I have blotted out thy transgressions.'"

And so God will blot out your transgressions, dark and black and heavy though they are, if you come to him in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. And though you may not know just how it was done, your sorrows will be gone, your rebuking conscience will have peace, and God will have freed you from your chains of evil habit.

There is another thought about this laying hold of eternal life which ought to have great interest to some of you, and that is, that your hold of salvation may cause many others, and some that are very dear to you, to be saved.

A gentleman writing in *The Advance* tells of a young woman who had been brought up in a Christian home, who went away in her young womanhood, and after a time married into a family opposed to Christianity, and for years never attended public service. But children came, and the mother's heart demanded for her boys the influences of Church and Sunday-school that had surrounded her own young life. A Sunday-school Convention furnished the first occasion for a break in the long absence from the house of God. Later came a series of revival-meetings, and the very first night the young mother laid hold upon Christ, and took her stand and maintained it thereafter, not without mild opposition on the part of her husband, who thought her good enough without it.

But as the days went on she felt that her life was not complete. She believed she ought to have family worship. So she talked with her husband, and told him that she must do it, but that he need not feel that he must go out. However, he went, and she read and prayed with the children. Then the boys thought that if papa did n't stay they need n't, and they went out, too. So sometimes she had all three children, and sometimes she had family worship alone. But she had faith to believe that time would bring all things right. And, sure enough, in a week or so her husband began to stay in, and in the third week of the meetings he was converted.

Then they talked over the family worship again, and decided that she should read and he pray. They

did that way for awhile, but she was n't satisfied: she wanted each to have some part in it. So they talked it over again. It did n't seem best that all should pray every time, and they finally settled it that they should take turns in praying, and that on Sunday they would have prayer all around. And that is the way they have done ever since. The three sons are young men now, and are all strong Christians and workers in the Church.

So it came to pass that when that young mother laid hold upon Jesus Christ, she tied the whole family up to eternal life, and not only one, but five in her own household have had their lives blessed and glorified through her conversion.

The blessed thing about all these incidents of transformed lives is that God is no respecter of persons, and that his call to just such mercy and love comes to every one who hears me now. And in perfect confidence of God's willingness to save, I call upon every one who is not a Christian already to "lay hold on eternal life." It will not be indifference that you lay hold upon, but you will find heavenly hands of mercy coming out to meet yours. When God sent the angels to lead Lot out of Sodom, the record says that while he tarried and hesitated to go, the messengers laid hold on his hand to lead him, and that this was to show God's mercy. God's mercy is as great now, and if we could only see with clearer eyes we would perceive many an angelic messenger laying caressing hands on some that are here and seeking to lead them out of their Sodom of indifference and sin up into the mountains of safety.

XXII

The Personal Vision of Christ

"And sitting down they watched him there."—MATTHEW XXVII, 36.

THAT is a very striking statement, and suggests a wonderful picture. Think of the different people who were in that group of watchers about the cross of Jesus, and how different were the visions they had of the central figure hanging there.

There were the soldiers—cruel, brutal men in that day—and they saw in Christ only a criminal whom it was their duty to watch until he was dead.

In vivid contrast to them were the faithful women who had been Christ's friends and disciples, and whose loyal love did not shrink from him in the time of his trial and suffering. They are nearest of all to the foot of the cross. They see in him the noblest friend and benefactor they have ever known, and their hearts are breaking with tender sorrow.

The mother of Jesus is among these, and she has a vision of him different from any one else. It is a mother's look she gives. She sees her son. She remembers when he was a little, new-born babe in her arms yonder in the stable in Bethlehem. She remembers how close she held him to her breast on

the journey down into Egypt to escape the soldiers of Herod, who would have taken his life. She recalls the happy days in Nazareth when he played with the shavings on the floor of the carpenter's shop. All the wonderful story of his three and thirty years come back to her now. But I imagine that one thing above all else fills her heart as she looks at the cross and sees the pain written on his face. It is that her boy is suffering and she can not help him; and only a mother can know what anguish that must have been.

The disciples, looking from a distance, saw in Christ blighted hopes. They were fond of him, they had been devoted to him, but they had thought he was to be an earthly king, and they could not understand this lamentable change in his fortunes; and so they watched the dying Savior with sad perplexity.

On either side of Jesus was a malefactor condemned to death for his crimes. One of these men judged Christ out of his own wicked heart, and saw in him, as in himself, only a hardened criminal who deserved his fate, and with peculiar maliciousness joined with the rabble to make the last hours of Jesus, if possible, more bitter still.

The other thief caught some glimpse of the true mission of Jesus. It seems wonderful to us that he should, but we do not know what opportunities the man may have had. He may have witnessed some miracle of Christ's that convinced him that Jesus was what he claimed to be, the Messiah; or, what is more likely, the gentleness, the patience,

and, above all, the forgiving spirit of Jesus during the agony on the cross may have convinced this wicked man that there was something in him above and beyond all human power. As he heard Christ pray amid the shouting of the rabble, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," his heart gathered hope that here was a Divine and ever-living King, whom death would not be able to hold, and who would have power to forgive his sins and save him in heaven. And so, forgetting his anguish of body in the deeper anxiety for his soul, he cried out, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The Pharisees, including the priests themselves, steeped in their own hollow formalism, having lost the spirit of their religion long ago in their cold and indifferent worship, saw in Christ only a fraud, and looked on his sufferings with a sneer, believing him to be an impostor.

Angels were brooding over that scene, and they saw in Jesus a love so wonderful that they could not understand it. They had known Christ in heaven when he was clothed upon with all the glory of the heavenly world. They had seen him put aside the wealth of the skies, where the poorest inhabitant is richer than the greatest millionaire of earth, and they had watched over him as he came down and became poor even on the earth. They had followed his way; they had comforted him after the temptation in the wilderness; they soothed his sorrows in

the Garden of Gethsemane; and now, invisible to the other watchers, but just as real, they watch him there and wonder at the depths of love that could bring Christ to the cross to die for sinners.

Devils were there, too, like the dark, black-winged bats that fly in the night; and these spirits of evil saw in Christ the promised seed of Eve that was to bruise the serpent's head; and they were filled with dismay. They, too, had met Christ before. In the country of the Gadarenes they had held a man in bondage so that he dwelt in the tombs and was feared and hated of all, until Jesus came and set him free and made a noble, glorious man of him. They also wondered at the love that dared to die to save sinners.

The Heavenly Father watched that cross, and he saw in Jesus perfect obedience in giving himself to save the lost; and the heart of Heaven throbbed with perfect love.

And the multitude of passers-by—what did they see in Christ? Alas, they saw nothing—nothing but a man who had gotten himself into trouble by claiming to be better than his fellows. With them it was only an hour's sensation. They went to the crucifixion as men go to a circus. It was the talk of an afternoon and a night, and to-morrow forgotten. They looked on the cross of Christ with indifference.

Now, these groups make up the types of the eyes that watched Jesus on the cross. Which one of them represents you? Alas, I fear that there are many of you who are like that great company which was in the majority at the time of the crucifixion,

who saw the death of Jesus with indifference. You have become hardened to the story of Christ's sufferings and death for you.

An electrician in New Orleans has recently called attention to the fact that the bodies of men employed in and around electrical plants become, to a large degree, immune to shocks from live wires. He employs men who receive shocks which would kill any ordinary man; yet they apparently suffer little from them. One incident he mentions in illustration. It was a case in which two men came in contact accidentally with a live wire, and both received, at the same time, precisely the same current. One of them was a helper around a dynamo, and had met with accidents of the same kind, though not so serious, before. He was knocked down and stunned by the shock, but was up again and about his work in two minutes, and was apparently none the worse. The other, who was a larger and much stronger man, but a stranger to electrical work, was half an hour in recovering consciousness, and was ill in bed afterwards for several days. Evidently repeated shocks have a tendency to increase the power of resistance, and it is well for the men who have much to do with electricity that it is so.

But in the spiritual world, where the same tendency is observed, the result is very sad indeed. And some of you who hear me are illustrations of the fact that if one has heard the gospel plainly and honestly preached until the Word has been used by the Spirit of God to rouse the conscience and stir the emotion so that the heart is impelled to accept

Christ as a Savior, and the impulse is disregarded, and the soul stubbornly refuses to obey the Divine call, the heart hardens until the same message does not have the same effect again. Solomon was wise about this when he said, "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." God forbid that that should be the end, the tragic and sorrowful end, of the hardening-process that has been going on in your heart! But if it is not to be so there must be an arousing of your will to break down the lethargy and indifference that has kept you from acting on hearing the message of God's Word.

A man in a New York hospital is undergoing the process of ossification, by which his flesh is turning to bone. It is an incurable malady, and in a short time will result in death. His case is regarded by physicians with wonder and curiosity, and by the general public with a feeling akin to horror and pity. In the physical domain it is regarded as a very unusual phenomenon; but in spiritual experience it is sadly common. And I doubt not that some of you could bear testimony that once you were sensitive to every breath of influence intended to move you to reverence and worship, but now you have become indifferent and unfeeling, and the things that once moved you toward righteousness, that aroused your gratitude toward God, that awakened the feeling of responsibility in your heart, move you no more. Your heart is getting hard and unnatural. If, drawn by the Spirit of God, you would break down your stubbornness and indifference, and bring a broken

and contrite heart to the mercy-seat, and gaze anew at the cross of Jesus, I am sure what you would see there would move you to action.

Some people suppose they need some special kind of faith before they can become Christians; but that is a great mistake. The faith that you need is that which will cause you to obey Christ. Mr. Moody puts it this way: Suppose I meet a man whom I have seen, night after night, begging, and I say to him, "Hello, beggar; is that you?"

"Do n't call me a beggar. I am no longer a beggar."

"Are you not the man who has been begging here every night?"

"Yes."

"Where did you get your good clothes? How is it you are not a beggar?"

"No, I am not a beggar; I am worth a thousand dollars."

"How is that?"

"Well, sir, last night I was here begging, and a man came along and put a check for one thousand dollars in my hand."

"How did you know it was good?"

"I took it to the bank this morning, and they gave me gold for it."

"Did you really get it in that way?"

"Yes."

"How did you know it was the right kind of handwriting?"

"Well," says the beggar, "what do I care about the handwriting? I have got the money."

So faith is the hand that reaches out and takes forgiveness. Any faith that brings you to Christ as your Savior is the right kind of faith, and instead of looking at your faith look to Christ. The poor thief on the cross did not know anything about the different theories concerning faith. It was the Christ who gave him hope. He had nothing worth presenting in himself, and he knew nothing about the theory of salvation, but he saw something in the face of Jesus Christ that made him believe in him; and at once he made his appeal and was forgiven. See if you have the right kind of Christ—a Christ that is able and willing to give you victory over sin.

I wish I knew what to say to arouse some of you from your lethargy. You have heard many sermons where the preacher has faithfully sought to point you to Christ as your Savior, and they do not seem to have done you much good; you still remain away from him. If you die as you are living now, you will be lost. If death were suddenly to meet you to-night, you would die without hope. I can not bear to have you go away in that condition. I have preached to some of you many times, and I wonder if it is my fault if I have failed in any way to make the message plain and clear and tender and loving to you. May God help me to put the right view, the true picture of Jesus Christ who died to redeem you, before your eyes!

I fear that some of you are getting farther away every year. There was a time when you had no doubt that some day before long you would come to Christ and seek salvation; but you think less of it

now than you used to think. You are beginning to wonder now whether you ever will be a Christian or not. Heaven was once your ideal, and you did not dream that you could miss it; but you do n't count on it so surely now as you did then.

When Nansen, the Arctic explorer, attended the Geographical Congress in Berlin recently, he was asked his opinion as to the prospects of success of the present polar expedition and those planned; and he said, in substance, that he did not intend to venture into the Arctic again, and has evidently lost hope that the north pole will ever be reached. How different he used to talk in those days before he made his great venture in the North!

But there are many who have come to the same conclusion about reaching heaven at last. O I pray you, in God's name, do not let this great hope of your immortality be smothered out by the worldliness and sin which surround you. You can not attain it in your own strength, but I call you to look upon the crucified Christ, who is now more than the crucified Christ—the risen and glorified Savior—who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."

XXIII

My Neighbor's Duty and My Own

"Lord, and what shall this man do?"—JOHN XXI, 21.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—ACTS IX, 6.

"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—JOHN XVII, 4.

THE first sentence of our text is a part of the last recorded dialogue which Jesus had with Peter. It has a very picturesque background. It occurred on the morning after a group of the disciples had fished all night and caught nothing. At daybreak they discovered Jesus on the shore of the lake, and Peter swam ashore ahead of the rest, that he might have a first and private conversation with him. Jesus cooked the breakfast for them himself, and after they had eaten together, he had a heart-searching talk with Peter. "Simon, son of Jonas," he inquires, "lovest thou me more than these?" And Peter answers, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Upon which he replies, "Feed my lambs." And he makes the same inquiry again, until Peter's heart is grieved, and he exclaims, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Then Jesus makes known to him that he shall continue to live to be an old man, and shall at last die a martyr, being crucified for his faith in him. And immediately after-

wards the Savior says to him, "Follow me." Then Peter, turning about, saw John, and inquired of Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Some people have thought that this was an envious, jealous sort of question which Peter put to Christ, as though he had said, "Is John always to have the easy place, and I the hard one? Is John to escape the struggle and the hardship and the martyrdom, while I am to walk the thorny path towards the cross?" But I think that is a slander on Peter. Peter had his faults, but I fail to discover among them the narrow meanness of envy and jealousy. I prefer rather to believe that Peter's question arose spontaneously out of his friendly interest in John. His own path had just been marked out to him—but what about his chum, the closest friend he had in the world? What is to happen to him? And so, full of inquisitiveness, of curiosity, which was a strong characteristic of Peter's nature, he inquires, "What shall this man do?"

The direct refusal of Jesus to tell him, and the clear rebuke of his words, ought to teach us, as well as Peter, the lesson of the individuality of our lives, and that while it is our privilege and our duty to be helpful and to bless our friends and neighbors, there is an individual and personal destiny for each one of them, into which, though we love them better than our own lives, we can not enter. Christ threw Peter back on his own personal duty, "What is that to thee?" Asking perplexing questions about John was not Peter's supreme duty. Christ recalls Peter to his own great mission by saying, "Follow thou me."

This brings us to the second part of the text, which has to do with our individual duty. It, also, has a most interesting background. Paul was on the way to Damascus with authority to arrest and imprison Christians wherever he found them, and he was angry and full of wrath against Christ and his disciples. As he journeyed on in this evil spirit, "Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

That must ever be the cry of every earnest soul. The men and women who have accomplished whatever is worth while in the world, have been those who have had aroused within their souls this deep cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The question suggests the positive nature of all true life. It is not a world for dreaming only, but for doing. Dreaming is blessed if it be crystallized into doing. Dreaming is glorious if it be the spongy, springy soil of the mountain plateau out of which the brook gurgles, issuing on its courageous course to the sea. We should teach this positive life to men from childhood up. Gladstone said a great thing when he uttered this terse sentence, "It is a great work to reform; but it is a greater work to form." A positive life of goodness from youth on, that is the life for lack of which in abundance the world halts

in its advance. It is what we do that counts. We hear sometimes at funerals, "Only remembered by what I have done," and among the Swedes there is a poet that sings:

"It matters little where I was born,
Or if my parents were rich or poor;
Whether they shrank from the cold world's scorn
Or walked in the pride of wealth secure;
But whether I live an honest man,
And hold my integrity firm in my clutch,
I tell you, my brother, as plain as I can,
It matters much!

It matters little how long I stay
In a world of sorrow, sin, and care;
Whether in youth I am called away,
Or live till my bones and pate are bare;
But whether I do the best I can
To soften the weight of adversity's touch
On the faded cheek of my fellow-man,
It matters much!

It matters little where be my grave,
Or on the land or on the sea;
By purling brook or 'neath stormy wave,
It matters little or naught to me;
But whether the Angel of Death comes down
And marks my brow with his loving touch,
As one that shall wear the victor's crown,
It matters much!"

Here is a suggestion, also, of the fact that a man's salvation is, under God, within his own reach. In the highest sense each of us is the architect of his own fortune. He may turn over a new leaf, though he has long gone wrong. Though he has been indifferent to God's purpose for him, he may awake as

a drunken man out of a slumber, and seeing a new vision of God's thought concerning him, rise up at the call of conscience and duty, and go forth and live a life worthy of the Son of God.

Dr. John Clifford, the English preacher, has recently spoken in strong and earnest rebuke of the novelists who exploit that hopeless pessimism which teaches that we are the children of chance, and are often held in the grip of heartless chains which we have no power to break. He declares that it is not true. If it were, there might be some excuse for those who preach such tidings of great sadness. "Sadness?" says one novelist. "My books are full of it. The world is full of it. Show me the masterpieces of art, literature, or music, and I shall show you creations palpitating with sadness." No doubt; but the world does not "sorrow without hope." It has tragedy, and the artist who penetrates to the heart of life will represent it; but if he is a true artist he will paint the figure of "Love among the Ruins." He will see the fierceness of life, but also its tenderness, its helpful love, its integrity and worth. He will sketch its wild revolts, its angry rebellions, but also the love that redeems and that, even if it fails, still toils to make "all things new."

The greatest souls do not whine and rebel against this world; they have faith in God, they walk in fellowship with Jesus Christ, and they work together with God to cure earth's sins and sorrows. There are islands of blessing in the oceans of misery, and men may sail to them and land on them if they will. "God 's in his heaven," and if not to-day, yet to-

morrow, or the day after, all will be right with the world. And all may be right with your world. No one here is in such a slough of despond, no one here is so handcuffed with "bonds of bitterness," but Jesus Christ has died to make you free. And this very hour, if you will cease to "kick against the pricks," you may rise up into the new life of freedom and hope.

A bright writer commenting on Markham's poem, "The Man with the Hoe," makes this striking remark: "God sent man out of Eden's bowers with a hope and a hoe. And each was a blessing, the importance of which the world has not yet recognized. The hope meant Christ. The hoe meant work."

That is the gospel I bring you to-night. Hope and work. Nothing can stand in your way if you are sick of sin, and want to be a good man or a good woman. Act at once on the impulse that comes to you, and turn to Christ with Paul's question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Mr. Moody tells a beautiful story of the conclusion of the war between the North and the South. A number of the Southern soldiers had become separated from the army, and had gone over into the Northern lines. They had wandered about for a long time in the woods, thinking that at any time they might fall in with some squadron of Northern soldiers, and be arrested and taken to prison. They were starving to death, when a Southern officer, riding past, discovered them, and, noticing their condition, asked them what they were doing, and they replied that they were afraid for their lives. "Ah!" he said, "go to the nearest town, whether it be North

or South it does not matter. Peace has been proclaimed, and all are brothers again." They were free, but did not know it. So Christ made your freedom, your hope, your victory, possible when he died in your stead. We are told that the great song we shall sing in heaven at last will be, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

I would we might ask ourselves this serious question, "What am I doing with the work God has given me to do?" Jesus was able to say as he drew near the end, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." We can not throw our work off upon somebody else. Every man and woman among us must stand or fall on their own work. Compromises in religious matters always prove a failure, as it turned out in the case of David Harum, who left Polly to do most of the churchgoing for the family. When Polly worried at him about it, he finally compromised by agreeing to go to church regularly on Thanksgiving. When asked if he kept his promise, he replied, "Wa'al, sir, fer the next five years a' never missed attendin' church on Thanksgivin' but four times." That is about the way religion by proxy works. Some men try to console themselves with the thought that because they had a noble Christian father and a saintly mother, and were brought up in a Christian home, and have been so hedged about by Christian influences that they have always paid a certain respect and reverence to religion, they can

not be going very far wrong. A man may have all that and yet fail, utterly fail, of doing his duty, and lose himself at last.

In Scotland a certain chain bridge was famous for its massive strength. A French engineer who saw it built a similar bridge over the river Seine. It was lighter than the one in Scotland. When its gates were opened to the public it began ominously to sway to and fro beneath their tread, and presently gave way. The trouble with this bridge was that the architect had omitted the middle bolt. The middle bolt of the fabric of human character is submission to God, the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. Are you doing your duty? Are you pleasing God? Is Christ your Savior walking with you in fellowship because of your obedience and submission to him? If that is so, then the middle bolt of character is yours, and your bridge of life will bear its burdens. But if that is not so, nothing else can take its place, and when the great strain comes all the fair fabric of your life will fall into a broken and useless heap. God help me to speak to your conscience to-night, to speak to your inner self, to awaken the slumbering manhood and womanhood there, that you may rise up to cry with trembling earnestness, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

XXIV

The King's Jewels

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—MALACHI III, 17.

GOD loves beautiful things. His thoughts bloom in roses and lilies and carnations and rhododendrons. Sometimes they blossom into wondrous beauty in a few hours after peeping out of the earth, as do the wild gardens on the edge of the glaciers in the short mountain summer. And then again God broods over a plant for a hundred years before it bursts into bloom, as in the century plant.

God's love of beauty speaks everywhere. His thoughts sparkle in dewdrops, and fall white in snow-storms, and glisten and dazzle in the sleet-covered forest, and are poured out in showers of gentle rain. God's thoughts are in colors; they are gratefully green in the spring meadow, and magnificently golden in the ripened fields of summer; they grow resplendent in the autumn—now russet, now yellow, and now crimson and scarlet.

God's thoughts are graceful in form, whether it be manifest in the playfulness of the squirrels or in the flight of the birds. God's thoughts solidify into rocks, and rise loftily into mountain summits, and

dive deep into the depths of the sea, and stretch far away across the rolling waves. They lift themselves into the far-off spaces, and fill the universe with stars and suns and rolling worlds. God's thoughts crystallize into veins of silver and gold, and into rare and precious stones—opal and garnet and topaz and sapphire and diamond.

And we are assured that when God thinks of his children he thinks of them as the most precious and beautiful things which he has made—his own peculiar treasure, that which is dearer to him than anything else and which he would wear on his heart.

Who are these people that are so dear to God that he calls them his jewels? This is the description that is given of them. In a time of folly and wickedness, when many people were drawn away from God, and thought only of worldly things, there were some that remained true: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

You see there are no specially strange or marvelous or unusually heroic conditions attached, that would bar out any sincere soul seeking honestly to serve God and do his will. God feels this way about the people who love him enough to go to church as regularly as they can, with genuine purpose to keep in close touch and fellowship with other people who

love him. They go there to pray and sing and commune with him, and the Lord hears it and knows about it, and somebody, it may be some angel, or possibly some ransomed and redeemed saint, is keeping a book of remembrance, and not a single sincere worshiper is left out of that book.

Now what may we get from all this to comfort our hearts, and give us courage to go on our way rejoicing, doing our work more bravely? In the first place, we may be sure that God loves us. Whether or no we understand all it means to be the jewel of God, we know that jewels are the peculiar gifts of love, and we are sure that when God says we shall be his jewels in the immortal life he means to tell us that he loves us better than anything else in the universe. Isaiah caught a glimpse of this great love in the heart of God for his children who seek to do his will, and exclaimed, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Such a life Isaiah saw to be the dearest thing in the world to God. "Thou shalt also be," said he, "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."

God sees this possibility of loveliness and of lovableness in all men. Many people who are not Christians in personal experience find it impossible to understand the spirit of Christian missions and the wisdom in sending missionaries to carry the Gospel

to heathen lands; or to appreciate the motives of those in the college settlements and the Deaconess homes—mission workers who go down into the worst slums, or who in the prisons seek to bring blessing and comfort to criminals. These unfortunate men and women seem to the unchristian philosopher to be so utterly lost and so completely vile that it is the height of folly to waste wisdom and money and time in trying to bring them up to the plane of nobility and goodness. We should deal gently with such critics, for ignorance is at the bottom of it all. They have not seen the worth of humanity in itself. If they could see for one moment through the eyes of God into the human heart, they would know that there never was a man so low, in India, or China, or in the islands of the sea, but there were in him possibilities of loveliness that would make him one of the King's jewels, the joy and the glory of heaven.

"What dirty, dreadful, disgusting stuff!" exclaimed a man who was walking with Ruskin in London, and was speaking of the mud of the London streets. John Ruskin laid his hand upon the arm of his companion and said: "Hold, my friend; not so dreadful after all. What are the elements of this mud? First, there is sand; but when its particles are crystallized according to the law of its nature, what is nicer than clean, white sand? And when that which enters into it is arranged according to a still higher law, we have the matchless opal. What else have we in this mud?" continued Ruskin. "Clay. And the materials of clay, when the particles are arranged according to their higher laws, make the

brilliant sapphire. What other ingredients enter into the London mud? Soot. And soot in its crystallized perfection forms the diamond. There is but one other—water. And water, when distilled according to the higher law of its nature, forms the dewdrop, resting in exquisite perfection in the heart of the rose. So," continued Ruskin, "in the muddy, lost soul of man is hidden the image of his Creator; and God will do his best to find his opals, his sapphires, his diamonds, and dewdrops."

We may be sure from the figure used in our text that there is nothing so valuable or so beautiful in the eye of God as simple goodness and sincere and honest worship. Some people are bewildered with the false idea that sin is more beautiful and attractive, has more charm about it, than goodness. It is true that there may be that which is more dazzling to the eye jaundiced by evil in a career of folly and selfishness, but the permanent charm and that which will continue to satisfy with no sting of regret is all in simple, honest goodness. Goodness often wears in this world very humble garments, but in the glory of heaven it will shine more resplendent than anything else. Last summer it became necessary to take eight million dollars in cash from a certain banking-house in New York, carry the money through the streets of that city, and deliver it to the City Comptroller. The bills, from twenty-dollar to one-thousand-dollar notes, were sorted and tied up with red tape in million-dollar packages, and were put into a cheap-looking, common valise of bluish canvas with yellow leather trimmings. One of the bankers then

closed the spring-lock and summoned two of the firm's messengers and the porter. They went through the building to where the cabs had been ordered, and there the banker got into the middle cab with the bag full of wealth, and nine of the firm's employees preceded or followed in the other cabs. The money was paid over in safety, and the banker in speaking of it afterwards, said, "Of all the people I met, not one looked at the bag of money." So goodness sometimes goes about in a quiet, homely dress that attracts no particular attention, but God never loses sight of it as his peculiar treasure, and to him there is no charm in all the brilliancy and dash and show of the world compared to the preciousness and beauty of the humble and sincere heart that does his will out of love.

I am sure that our study this morning, if the Holy Spirit shall rightly impress its message on our hearts, will make us very sensitive in our feelings concerning the care we ought to take of these jewels of God. If my character is a matter of great importance to the King of kings, if my failure to do right is a disappointment to God, if an evil spot in my soul is the deepest hurt that can be given to the heart of my Heavenly Father, then how careful I ought to be to do right, to be true; to die rather than disappoint God.

And I am sure also that if there is in any of our hearts a sad feeling that we have in some way been a disappointment to God, that we have failed to do the good we ought to do, or have neglected the opportunity of serving him with the earnestness that

was our privilege, or by self-indulgence or evil associations have marred the jewel that was so precious to God, there will be great tenderness in our hearts, and I pray God there may be a deep longing that this jewel, this rare treasure committed to us, may be given up again to be cleansed and polished and made just what he would have it to be.

There has been great excitement this last summer around the Island of Corfu, where the late Empress Elizabeth of Austria kept up a magnificent establishment for many years. The whole population have turned pearl-fishers. They are searching for one of the greatest treasures of the Imperial House of Hapsburg, her late Majesty's necklace, which Francis Joseph hung about Elizabeth's neck on a glorious April day in 1854 when he called her his bride. The Emperor had ransacked his crown treasury to collect material for this unparalleled necklace, but though his coffers were well filled with the inheritance of a long line of splendor-loving ancestors, it took a round million florins in cash to complete the string, of which each gem was the exact counterpart of every other in silvery whiteness, smoothness, and wondrous iridescence. And this necklace is lying somewhere on the bottom of the channel of Corfu in the Ionian Sea, where the Empress herself deposited it.

The story of this lost necklace is very interesting. Elizabeth was very proud of this necklace of pearls, and wore it constantly. She derived much satisfaction from the fact that it seemed impossible to duplicate her treasure, for though the Czarina of Russia and Queen Victoria and dozens of lesser queens gave

their jewelers *carte blanche*, these gentlemen sooner or later had to acknowledge their inability to match Elizabeth's wonderful pearls. Finally, in 1889, the Empress fell ill, so ill that for a long time her life was despaired of. Francis Joseph knew that if his wife was to recover, her fairy castle in Corfu was the place for her to find new life. The suffering Empress was brought to the beautiful islands with all haste. There for many weeks she hovered between life and death, but at last slowly began to recover. When she got up for the first time and sat before her mirror to have her hair dressed, a single look in the glass made her shiver and clutch her throat. Two doctors were immediately summoned, but on their arrival they found the Empress herself again.

"It was nothing," she said, "only a sudden thought that struck me and made me lose control of myself."

As a matter of fact, Her Majesty had caught sight of the pearl necklace that she had worn night and day during the entire course of her illness, and its condition had frightened her. The gems themselves were unhurt, not a single one was broken, but their luster and whiteness were entirely gone. They looked gray, foggy, dull, like the eyes of death.

The Empress had read in some scientific work that pearls, having lost their luster through age or other influences, may be given back their natural iridescence by exposure to the play of the ocean's waves. Consequently she had a casket constructed, with chain, anchor, and locket attached. The casket was of iron, lined with silver, and perforated throughout with holes like a sieve. In this casket Elizabeth

deposited her pearls, and the jewel-casket was anchored in the sea and fastened to a rock. Two years later she caused the casket to be raised, and finding the pearls unimproved, anchored the precious casket in another place, the secret of which seems to have died with her, and unless it is found the world will not know whether the scientists were right or not in their advice.

But whether or not it be true that there is power in the ocean's waves to bring back the beauty and iridescence to pearls that have become dulled and diseased, it is true that there is in the heart of God the ability to cleanse his own jewels which have lost their beauty and their glory, and have become contaminated by evil associations. That is the great message I bring you. O heart that has grown worldly, the jewel of whose character has been dulled by rubbing against selfishness and greed! O heart that has grown sick and faint in associations with unholy thoughts and evil deeds, until the jewel of the soul has lost its iridescence and its beauty! Hear the message which I bring! God has not cast you off; though you have fallen into the mud, though you have been held in the clutches of sin, though you have even been worn to adorn the evil, God has not cast you away. Even now he is seeking after you with infinite tenderness and love. And if you will but give yourself up to him again with a new purpose of heart, he will cleanse your thoughts, he will purify your imagination, he will polish you with infinite skill, and will wear you at last, through all eternity, as one of his precious jewels.

XXV

The Conquest of Our Faults

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."—JUDE 24, 25.

NOTHING is more in evidence in this world than the frail and perishable quality of the things with which we have to do. How many there are in these days who are ready to cry out with Jeremiah: "Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it. My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains." How easily is the tent of life destroyed!

Victor Hugo tells of a wonderful tent that was given to Napoleon by the Sultan Selim. From the outside it appeared like an ordinary tent, remarkable only for having in the canvas little windows, of which the frames were of rope; three windows on each side. The inside was superb: the visitor found himself inside a great chest of gold brocade; upon this brocade were flowers and a thousand fancy devices. On looking closely at the cords of the windows one

discovered that they were of the most magnificent gold and silver lace; each window had its awning of gold brocade; the lining of the tent was of silk, with large red and blue stripes. Hugo says, "If I had been Napoleon, I should have liked to place my iron bed in this tent of gold and flowers, and to sleep in it on the eve of Wagram, Jena, and Friedland." Yet there came a Waterloo, in which Napoleon's glorious tent went to pieces in the storm. All his genius and marvelous force could not keep it from falling. But Jude says that there is one who is able to keep us from falling, and that in the highest and noblest sense.

One of the most common fears that make men hesitate about beginning the Christian life is the fear of falling by the wayside. Many a man has said to me, "If I was sure I could hold out faithful, and do my duty by Christ and the Church for the rest of my life, I would confess Christ at once." But the fear of failure holds many a man back. If there be any such that hear me, I want to press home on your heart these strong words of Jude. In this doxology, Jude declares that Christ is able to keep us from falling. You may say, "Yet I have seen many start who did not abide faithful, but fell into grievous sin." Yes, but those very people would have been the first to admit that it was not because Christ was not willing, or was not able, to keep them from falling, that they stumbled; but because they took themselves out of his guidance and direction. There is not a poor backslider in this city but will admit that as long as he was faithful to Jesus Christ, Christ was able to

keep him from falling. A man can be placed in no circumstances so hard but that Christ is able to comfort his soul and give him courage and bring him off triumphant.

I was greatly impressed the other day with a little story of the fidelity of a Christian soldier. A dozen rough soldiers were playing cards one night in the camp.

"What on earth is that?" suddenly exclaimed the ringleader, as he stopped in the midst of the game to listen.

In a moment the squad were listening to a low, solemn voice which came from a tent occupied by several recruits who had arrived in camp that day. The ringleader approached the tent on tiptoe.

"Boys, he 's praying!" he roared out.

"Three cheers for the parson!" shouted another man of the group, as the prayer ended.

"You watch. I 'll show you how to take the religion out of him," said the first speaker, who was the ringleader in the mischief.

The recruit was a slight, pale-faced fellow of about eighteen years of age. During the next three weeks he was the butt of the camp. Then the regiment broke camp and engaged in a terrible battle. The company to which the young recruit belonged had a desperate struggle. The brigade was driven back, and when the line was re-formed behind the breastworks they had built in the morning he was missing from the ranks. When last seen he was almost surrounded by enemies, but fighting desperately. At

his side stood the brave fellow who had made the poor lad a constant object of ridicule. Both were given up as lost.

Suddenly the big man was seen tramping through the underbrush, bearing the dead body of the recruit. Reverently he laid the corpse down, saying, as he wiped the blood from his own face, "I could n't leave him—he fought so. I thought he deserved a decent burial."

During a lull in the battle the men dug a shallow grave, and tenderly laid the remains therein. Then, as one was cutting the name and regiment upon a board, the big man said, with a husky voice: "You 'd better put the words 'Christian soldier' in somewhere. He deserves the title, and maybe it 'll console him for our abuse."

There was not a dry eye among these rough men as they stuck the rudely-carved board at the head of the grave, and again and again looked at the inscription.

"Well," said one, "he was a Christian soldier if ever there was one. And," turning to the ringleader, "he did n't run, did he, when he smelt gunpowder?"

"Run!" answered the big man, his voice tender with emotion; "why, he did n't budge an inch. But what 's that to standing our fire like a man for weeks, never sending a word back? He just stood by his flag, and let us pepper him—he did."

When the regiment marched away, that rude headboard remained to tell what a power lies in a Christian life.

Christ is able not only to keep us from falling, but he is able to make conquest of our faults. He has not only power to forgive us the sins that are past, but he is able to cleanse our hearts from the evil imaginations out of which sin grows. We are never safe from the probability of faults unless the heart is pure in the sight of God. Dr. Peabody, in one of his talks to the students at Harvard College, says that "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," is the highest and deepest proposition that ever fell from human lips. Without the least argument or reasoning about it, as a thing that is perfectly self-evident, Jesus announces that purity of heart leads to the knowledge of God. We banish our faults when we see God clearly; but we can not have clear spiritual insight unless our hearts are pure. The perfect knowledge of God is to be attained only by the perfectly-consecrated life. The human soul is a mirror on which the light of God shines; and only the pure mirror reflects the perfect image. We can only have real peace when we are sure that God is directing and supporting us in all the perplexing experiences of life; and we can not have that certainty unless our hearts are pure, for it is only the pure heart that can see God. The glorious promise of Christ is that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, not only to forgive us our sins, but also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Men have always been trying to get rid of their faults by shallow methods. But such methods always fail. Christ says that a bitter fountain can

not send out sweet water. A thorn-tree will not bear grapes. A thistle-plant will not yield figs. And so it is with us. Our faults are the sharp spikes of the thistle; they are the useless fruit and the piercing thorns of the wild tree; they are the bitter dregs that come from a bitter fountain. If our faults are to be vanquished, we must begin at the heart. The very sap that runs out to the remotest twig of our lives must be changed. The whole spirit of life must be transformed. That is what Paul means when he says that when a man becomes a Christian he is made a "new creature in Christ Jesus."

I am sure there are some here who would like to get rid of their faults. In some degree your heart has been changed. Many of your faults have been vanquished. But ever and anon, in some hour of emergency and temptation, bitter waters come forth that make you know that the fountain is not right yet. Ever and anon the sharp spikes of the thistle and the thorn stick into your neighbors, and you feel sad and despairing for fear the old nature is still dominant. What shall you do? Give yourselves completely up into the hands of Jesus Christ, who is able not only to keep you from falling, but to take away all these blemishes, and present you finally without one ugly temper, without one unclean thought, without one impure imagination, without one greedy purpose, before the throne of God. O how precious would be this life if every one in this church, beginning with the pulpit and ending with the last probationer who has come in, would surrender himself or herself completely into

the hands of Jesus Christ to do his will, to do just what he wants us to do, to be mastered by him, to let him take away all our faults—the faults that we are half proud of as well as those of which we are ashamed. The light would shine out from this church so that all the city would feel its power, and multitudes, seeing the light, would glorify God unto their own salvation!

Mrs. Herrick Johnson has been studying this Scripture until it has aroused a song in her heart which has been very precious to my own soul; and I can but believe it will be a blessing to yours.

"'Faultless in His glory's presence!'
All the soul within me stirred,
All my heart reached up to heaven
At the wonder of that word.

'Able to present *me* faultless?
Lord, forgive my doubt,' I cried;
'Thou didst once, to loving doubt, show
Hands and feet, and riven side.

'O, for me build up some ladder,
Bright with golden round on round,
That my hope this word may compass
Reaching faith's high vantage ground!'

Praying thus, behold my ladder,
Reaching unto perfect day,
Grew from out a simple story
Dropped by some one in the way.

Once a queen—so ran the story—
Seeking far for something new,
Found it in a mill, where, strangely,
Naught but rags repaid her view.

Rags from out the very gutters,
Rags of every shape and hue,
While the squalid children, picking,
Seemed but rags from hair to shoe.

'What then,' rang her eager question,
'Can you do with things so vile?'
'Mold them into perfect whiteness,'
Said the master with a smile.

'Whiteness?' quoth the queen, half doubting;
'But these reddest, crimson dyes—
Surely naught can ever whiten
These to fitness in your eyes?'

'Yes,' he said, 'though these are colors
Hardest to remove of all,
Still I have the power to make them
Like the snowflake in its fall.'

Through my heart the words so simple
Throbbed with echo in and out;
'Crimson'—'scarlet'—'white as snowflake'—
Can this man, and can *God not?*

Now upon a day thereafter
(Thus the tale went on at will),
To the queen there came a present
From the master at the mill.

Fold on fold of fairest texture,
Lay the paper, purest white;
On each sheet there gleamed the letters
Of her name in golden light.

'Precious lesson,' wrote the master,
'Hath my mill thus given me,
Showing how our Christ can gather
Vilest hearts from land or sea;

'In some heavenly alembic,
Snowy white from crimson bring,
Stamp his name on each, and bear them
To the place of the King.'

* * * *

O, what wondrous vision wrapped me!
Heaven's gates seemed open wide!
Even I stood clear and faultless,
Close beneath the pierced side.

Faultless in His glory's presence!
Faultless in that dazzling light!
Christ's own love, majestic, tender,
Made my crimson snowy white!"

XXVI

Renewing the Youth of the Soul

"But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—ROMANS XII, 2.

WHEN Jesus Christ took Peter and James and John and went up on the mountain and was so transfigured before them that the glory of his Divinity shone out and enveloped him in a splendor before which his friends fell to the earth, the same word was used that we have used here to indicate the new life which comes to the Christian. It is a transfiguration of this present life into something beautiful and glorious. It is termed by Paul a renewal of the mind; and we may be sure that the beginning of Christianity as an incarnation in our lives is the renewing within us of the right thought about God and our relation to him.

A recent writer, speaking of the molding influence of our thoughts, quotes Victor Hugo as saying, "There are moments when, whatever the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees." The beginning of true religion is that kind of thought about God and ourselves which puts the soul upon its knees before the mercy-seat. The Bible sets forth very clearly that sin causes our mind and heart

to be unsightly vessels, filled with unclean and poisonous matter that breeds only decay and death, and it is the power, the miracle of Christianity that it is able to transform our minds until they become instead beautiful jewel-cases that will gladden the eye and rejoice the heart of all who behold them.

No greater blunder can be made than for a man to undertake to become a Christian by simply applying himself to live outwardly in obedience to Christian standards without first seeking by God's grace the renewing of the mind. The Word of God declares of a man that "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." And Thackeray gives us the same truth in other words when he says, "The key to every man is his thought." Christ transforms men by giving them new thoughts. Here is a man whose mind has been full of thoughts connected with appetite and passion, his imagination toying with evil pictures, who comes suddenly or gradually into the presence of Jesus Christ and has unfolded to his mind this new and wonderful idea of life until he is fascinated by it. He thinks new thoughts, not because he is standing guard and determined not to think the old ones, but because the new thoughts have taken possession of him and turned his mind working in another direction.

Some one writing in one of our magazines declares that the usual way that people set about stopping worry is the wrong one, and that that is the reason it is so unsuccessful. If a doctor tells a patient he must stop worrying, the patient is likely to say, impatiently: "O doctor, don't I wish that I

could! But I can't. If I could have stopped worrying a year ago I would not be ill now!" All of which is perfectly true. And the doctor does not always know how to help him, because both doctor and patient have an idea that it is possible to repress worry through an effort of the will. This is a mistake. It is not possible to repress worry. You must replace it with something else. Suppose you were to go into a completely dark room, wishing it to be light. How would you set about the work? Would you try to scoop the darkness up in buckets and carry it out at the door? No, indeed. You would just open the windows and shutters and let in the sunlight. You would replace the darkness with light. So it is with worry. The only possible way to get rid of it is to replace the worrying attitude of mind with the positive attitude of confidence and action, which will fill up the thought and time in other ways.

It is the same way with sin. A man can not come into his polluted heart and shovel out the evil imaginations, the unclean thoughts, the miserly purposes, the rebellious feelings which he finds there. No; he must throw up the shutters and let in the sunlight of Jesus Christ. The mind must be renewed, not by any artificial process, but by the cleansing power of this new thought, this new love that comes to him in the presence of Christ.

Some one has well said that no man can paint a picture of the Christ while thinking of the devil. All the sweetness, the majesty, the love that made that face too beautiful for human hands ever to re-

produce perfectly upon any canvas, would be disfigured by the thought conveying such a different idea to the brain and remaining there while the hands fashioned the mind's ideal.

Some of you remember with great joy the transformation that came to you in the renewing of your mind when your life was flooded with the new brightness and glory that came when Christ first shone clear upon your life. To others the Christian life, the development of the soul, kept pace with the opening and blossoming of physical power. You were so hedged about by Christian influences, and you were led on so gently from childhood's first innocent confidence in God, that you have no such memory of transformation; but you have the same joy of the renewed life, the evergreen life, constantly refreshed by fellowship and communion with God. Let us never worry how we got into the kingdom if we are there. The gospel brings peace to those that are far off as well as to those that are nigh, but it is a blessed thing to keep childhood nigh to God.

Canon Shore says he once saw lying side by side in a great workshop two heads made of metal. The one was perfect: all the features of a noble, manly face came out clear and distinct in their lines of strength and beauty. In the other scarcely a single feature could be recognized. It was all marred and spoiled. "The metal had been let go a little too cool, sir," said the man who was showing it to him.

How often that is illustrated in working upon forms more precious than any earthly metal! How

many we see who might have been stamped with the perfect image and superscription of the King of kings if they had been put into the mint while warm with the love and glow of early youth; but because they were neglected so long, in later years the writing is blurred and the image marred.

If we live in a thoroughly renewed attitude of mind, it must surely change our thoughts about the sorrows and trials of life, greatly to our comfort. What a wonderful promise Christ made to the disciples before going away from them, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." That is, their sorrow should be transformed; a light from the other world should shine on it until they should find hidden in it a great joy. Phillips Brooks, commenting on this, declares that it must be somewhere in the grief that the Christian's help of the grief is hidden. It must be in some discovery of the Divine side of the sorrow that the consolation of the sorrow will be found. It is, indeed, a transformation which comes over any man or woman when he or she stops asking of distress, "How can I throw this off?" and asks instead, "What did God mean by sending this?"

When a man can face his trials, honestly seeking to find the joy that God has hidden in them, he may well believe that time and work will help him. Time, with its necessary calming of the first wild surface tumult, will let him look deeper and ever deeper into the Divine purpose of sorrow, will let its deepest and most precious meanings gradually come forth so that he may see them. Work done in the

sorrow will bring him into ever new relation to the God in whom alone the full interpretation and relief of the sorrow lies. Time and work, not as a means of escape from distress, but as the hands in which distress shall be turned hither and thither, that the light of God may freely play upon it; time and work so acting as servants of God, not as substitutes for God, are full of unspeakably precious ministries for the suffering soul. But the real relief, the only final comfort, is God; and he relieves the soul always in its suffering by the new knowledge and possession of himself which could only come through that atmosphere of pain.

There is something very inspiring and beautiful in the thought that pain and trial need not make the soul narrow and little; but if we live in this renewed life of fellowship with Christ they will make the soul larger and more splendid. Myra Goodwin Plantz sings this truth with great beauty in her poem about "Answered Prayer:"

"I asked for bread: God gave me a stone instead;
Yet while I pillowed there my weary head,
The angels made a ladder of my dreams,
Which upward to celestial mountains led.
And when I awoke, beneath the morning's beams,
Around my resting-place fresh manna lay;
And, praising God, I went upon my way,
For I was fed.

I asked for strength: for with the noontide heat
I fainted, while the reapers, singing sweet,
Went forward with ripe sheaves I could not bear.
Then came the Master, with his blood-stained feet,
And lifted me with sympathetic care.
Then on his arm I leaned till all was done;
And I stood with the rest at set of sun,
My task complete.

I asked for light: around me closed the night,
Nor guiding star met my bewildered sight,
For storm-clouds gathered in a tempest near.
Yet, in the lightning's blazing, roaring flight
I saw the way before me straight and clear.
What though his leading pillar was of fire,
And not the sunbeam of my heart's desire?
My path was bright.

God answers prayer: sometimes, when hearts are weak,
He gives the very gifts believers seek.
But often faith must learn a deeper rest,
And trust God's silence when he does not speak;
For he, whose name is Love, will send the best.
Stars may burn out, nor mountain walls endure,
But God is true, his promises are sure
To those who seek."

If we live this life of ever-renewed and vital fellowship with Christ, we shall live a life of confidence and faith. And it is only from that standpoint of childlike faith that we get a point of view that will save us from the frights and terrors that come to those who are conformed to this world. A traveler tells how several people were looking out of the window of a swiftly-moving train, when one of them cried, "O, see that bear sitting there by the stone-heap," and they all looked and saw the bear. The train went on. As they drew near, another said, "It is not a bear, but a big dog;" and they all looked and saw the big dog. The train went on. And as it swept past, they looked back, and all said, "Why, it is only a stump." It was a stump.

We have been passing through a time like that in the criticism of scholars in regard to the Bible. And a great many who have seen only with their

heads have seen bears and big dogs and dangerous enemies to God's Holy Word. But there is one class of men and women in the world who have not been disturbed—the class who, with renewed minds, have walked in fellowship with Jesus Christ and have known that, whatever proved true concerning the Biblical record, the "Word of God" should live and abide in their hearts forever.

One of the most remarkable Christian men who ever lived was Livingstone, the discoverer and missionary. In the darkest complication of evils and troubles he was always confident that all would come right at last. In 1856, at the confluence of the rivers Loangwa and Zambesi, the neighboring tribes seemed bent on arresting his progress. Their preparations for battle seemed to indicate that the next day would be Livingstone's last. For awhile he was greatly troubled, not on his personal account, but because all he had discovered about the structure of the continent and all that he had planned for the future would be lost to the world. But he opened his Bible and read, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "It is the word of a gentleman," Livingstone said, "a gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honor." His fluttering heart was thenceforth calmed. The project of stealing away furtively by night that had previously been thought of was abandoned. He went about his observations for latitude and longitude as carefully as usual. Next day the enemy allowed him to leave without the slightest molestation. And all through life his trust was the same.

One of the noblest men the American navy has ever known was David Farragut. Before going into the battle of Mobile he wrote a letter to his wife, in which he says: "I am going into Mobile Bay in the morning. If God is my Leader—and I hope he is, and in him I place my trust—if he thinks it is the proper place for me to die, I am ready to submit to his will in that as in all other things." Such a faith as that can only spring from a living, vital, evergreen fellowship with the Highest.

How infinitely superior is this ever-renewed life—a life in which faith and enthusiasm and peace are ever refreshed at the heart-spring of the universe—to any life which depends simply on outward adornment and endowment. Emma Lazarus sings of the failure which has come to the great world-races who sought to enrich their manhood from the outside:

"'O World-God, give me wealth!' the Egyptian cried.
His prayer was granted. High as heaven, behold
Palace and pyramid; the brimming tide
Of lavish Nile washed all his land with gold.
Armies of slaves toiled ant-wise at his feet,
World-circling traffic roared through mart and street.
His priests were gods, his spice-balmed kings, enshrined,
Set death at naught in rock-ribbed charnels deep.
Seek Pharaoh's race to-day, and ye shall find
Rust and the moth, silence and dusty sleep.

'O World-God, give me beauty!' cried the Greek.
His prayer was granted. All the earth became
Plastic and vocal to his sense; each peak,
Each grove, each stream, quick with Promethean flame,
Peopled the world with imaged grace and light.
The lyre was his, and his the breathing might

Of the immortal marble, his the play
  Of diamond-pointed thought and golden tongue.
Go seek the sunshine-race, ye find to-day
  A broken column and a lute unstrung.

'O World-God, give me power!' the Roman cried.
  His prayer was granted. The vast world was chained
A captive to the chariot of his pride,
  The blood of myriad provinces was drained
To feed that fierce, insatiable red heart,
  Invulnerably bulwarked every part
With serried legions and with close-meshed code;
  Within, the burrowing worm had gnawed its home.
A roofless ruin stands where once abode
  The imperial race of everlasting Rome."

These three great illustrations ought to be enough to warn all people through all time. Man is to be made great and rich and beautiful, not from the outside, but from within. The robing-room of the soul is within. And so I come to you with the appeal which Paul made to Rome when she was athirst for power—an appeal which is just as appropriate to us in this rushing, materialistic age in which we live. And I pray God that the Holy Spirit may bring home to all our hearts with Divine force the message, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

XXVII

The Tug at the Oars

"And he saw them toiling in rowing."—Mark vi, 48.

One of our modern wits has written a book entitled, "Three Men in a Boat." But in this case we have a whole Church in a boat. Christ had sent all his little flock away in a boat while he gave the parting word to the multitude which had followed him out into the wilderness and which he had there met with welcome and generous provision. Christ had been weary when he went into the wilderness, and had retired there hoping for a little vacation from the constant burden of his work; and we may well believe that now, after the day's heavy nervous strain upon him, his body was completely tired out. But Christ had one place to which he always went for rest—a place which never failed him—and that was secret prayer. And so when that crowd without a shepherd had gone away for the night, Jesus took himself up into the mountain to pray. There, in communion with God, his weary body and burdened heart found rest.

In the meantime that little nucleus of the Christian Church, the personal friends of Jesus, who had

gone out in the boat at his word, had come into serious perplexity. The wind came up with the night, and as they undertook to row back to where they had left Jesus in order to take him on board, they found the wind contrary to them, and so strong was it that they not only found it hard to make headway against it, but were in great danger of being capsized and drowned.

I want to follow this little story as suggesting the conditions surrounding the Christian Church in our own time. We, too, are out in a boat, making our struggle at the command of Christ. Every earnest Christian and every earnest Christian Church will find that there is not only demand for rowing, but that mostly we shall row against the wind in our Christian work in this wicked world. The Church that rows with the wind, and has no opposition, is certainly not doing the work which the Lord wants done in the world. Christ's mission in the world is to destroy the works of the devil; and when you begin to cast out devils, you may depend upon it that you will have committees from the Pork Trust of to-day, as Christ did from Gadara when the herds of swine went into the sea. I never envy a preacher or a Church that is popular with saloons and gambling-hells and haunts of evil. I know that if Christ were here, he would not be popular with them. It is a crying shame when Churches and saloons live side by side in good-humored amiability. You may depend upon it that a Church is not doing right, is not loyal to Christ,

when there is a liquor saloon in the same town or a gambling-hell within the corporation with which it has no fight.

So long as there is sin in the world, the Christian Church must row against the current; and every man or woman in it will have the same experience. The moment a man tries to rise above his sin—his besetting sin—he will find the strength of the current against him. Sin is something more than guilt, more than evil habit—it is a fever in the very blood, a cancer of the heart. Paul describes it as "this body of death," which he could not shake off, no matter how hard he shook himself. Who of us has not known Paul's experience, "When I would do good, evil is present with me?" That is, When I would row up the stream heavenward, the wind and current are strong enough to blow me back, no matter how hard I tug at the oars. Some people say that the difference in men and women is all a difference of heredity, and if men had a new start it would be different. But they had a new start once, and it failed. Some of these scientists say, "If we could only begin afresh, if we could only take a few prime specimens of the race and begin again with them, we might educate them up into perfect righteousness and into noble service." And sometimes you hear preachers and religious teachers say almost the same thing. But that has been tried. An English preacher—Rev. Simpson Johnson—says that God tried this plan of the scientists at the time of the great flood. Wickedness had become great. God chose the eight best specimens that there were in

the world at the time—the one God-fearing family. He put them in the ark, and all the rest were destroyed. Now is a chance for the scientists. The drunkenness and the idolatry and the abominations of the earth were drowned in water, and eight good people, constituting one family, were left. The world will have a new start, and you may bring men up and train men up into a better life. But what was the result? The next generation of men was just as drunken and just as idolatrous as before; and why? Because sin is in the depraved nature of man, and if left there it will blossom out into the life. Fire will not burn sin, water will not quench sin, and there is only one way to get rid of it: there is only one Person in the universe who can effectually deal with sin, and that is the Christ who died upon the cross for our sins, who rose again for our justification, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

That little, first Christian Church in the boat found the storm too great for them without the presence of Christ. Alone, the wind was stronger than their oars. God has given man wonderful power over nature when he works in harmony with himself; but every once in a while he shows man—as he did the other day at Galveston, Texas—how utterly weak and helpless he is. Man can not measure strength with God.

On one occasion the great Napoleon arranged to review his fleet off Boulogne. Seeing a severe storm was impending, the admiral in command sent word to the Emperor, advising that the position of the ships should be altered. Napoleon demanded

obedience to his first directions; and the officer obeyed. The storm burst in terrific violence. Several vessels were wrecked, over two hundred soldiers and sailors were thrown into the fury of the sea, and but few escaped. The Emperor at once ordered the boats out to rescue the drowning men, but he was told that no boat could live in such a sea. Then, in the strength of his determination, he ordered a company of grenadiers to man his own boat, and springing into it, he exclaimed: "Follow me, my brave fellows! Push on! Push on!" In vain the poor soldiers struggled at the oars. "Push on!" cried Napoleon. "Do you not hear their cries. O this sea! this sea! It rebels against our power, but it may be conquered!" Scarcely had the words escaped his lips when a mighty wave struck the boat and sent it and its occupants with terrible force high up to shore, leaving them like a stranded waif. Thus was the proud Napoleon taught his own weakness.

So it was that the friends of Jesus battled against the waves that night. Tug as hard as they would, they made no headway. They thought they were unseen from the shore and would be lost. But they were not unseen. Jesus was watching them. Ah! there never was an eye so clear as Christ's. The darkest night can not hide from him. "He saw them toiling in rowing." Instantly his heart was filled with sympathy, and he went to their relief.

Brethren, let us learn our lesson. To do the work God wants us to do in this Church we must row against the wind. All the sins of men and women, the old commonplace sins that have soiled and hurt

humanity from the beginning, together with all the modern adaptations of vice and wickedness, roll up in waves against the Church. We must row against this mighty tide. We can not win without Christ. We must have him still in our hearts; we must have him in the boat with us.

Christ watches over us as sympathetically and lovingly as he did over that little infant Church, and he is as ready to come to us. When he comes, sin gives way and the devils flee. It is true of our individual sins, and it is true of our advance as a Church against the organized sins of society.

If any man who hears me is having a hard pull against odds in the question of his own personal life, I want to assure him of Christ's willingness to come into the boat and give him victory over the storm. You remember the story of Christian in John Bunyan's immortal book? Christian got through the narrow gate with the burden of sin pressing on his shoulders, and was directed to go up to a certain hill. He lifted up his eyes, and saw on the top of the hill a cross, and a man suspended on the cross. And the book tells us that the moment he saw the man on the cross the burden loosed from off his shoulders and fell from off his back, and tumbled, and tumbled, and tumbled, and went into the sepulcher, and he saw it no more forever. And he wondered to look at that man who relieved him of his burdens, and as he wondered he wept, and as he wept three shining ones came to him. And the first said, "Your sins are all forgiven you." And the second stripped him of his ragged garments, and gave him milk-

white robes for the Celestial City. And the third gave him a roll into his bosom, which he was to keep there; for it was to be his passport when he reached the city gates. And so there is one hope for a man in his sin, if he struggle to be free from it and to overcome it; and that is to take Christ into the boat of life with him. That man shall not only have the forgiveness of his sins, but he shall have a new character, he shall be a new creature in Christ Jesus, and he shall have blessed fellowship and communion with the Son of God.

Now, what happens to the individual shall also happen to the Church. All the troubles of the storm ended when Christ came to those tired and discouraged rowers. One came into the boat who had power over the sea; One came who inspired their hearts with courage, and there was peace. Dear friends, we must have Christ in the boat with us; and if we are to have him, then we must be willing to do our work in his spirit, and to do the work which he has to do.

If we are to keep Christ with us in the boat, we must pull together. Did you ever see two people rowing when they did not keep stroke? The result was that the boat went round and round, or slantwise, perhaps into danger of entanglement; but no real advance was made. People rowing together in the same boat must keep stroke. Each must desire to go the same way, and they must pull together in harmony, with one purpose. So the only way we can work effectively in the Church is through intelligent and earnest co-operation. If a man is rowing

alone, he can row whichever way his fancy takes, and he may pull with a short stroke or a long stroke, as he sees fit; but when a man rows with other people, he must take them into consideration. Now, one of the great things for us to learn when we come into the Christian Church is that we must seek to find a harmonious relation to our brothers and sisters in the work of the Church. There is only one possible way of harmony in the Church, and that is that all its members shall be so devoted to Jesus Christ, shall so love him and desire to serve him, that there shall be no room for personal selfishness to stir up strife. You can not carry on the Christian Church in a worldly spirit. In so far as that spirit prevails in its members, there will be strife and discord and lack of advancement. O for a baptism of Divine love! O for a vision of Christ as our Redeemer dying to save us, watching over us through the storm, loving us, brooding tenderly about us—a vision that shall melt our hearts and give us a new consecration to him, that shall so unite us that every oar will keep stroke, every heart will throb in sympathy, every voice will sing the song of praise unto our Divine Lord!

If we are to keep Christ in the boat with us, we must do his work; we must seek after the shipwrecked; we must hunt for the lost; we must be unselfish and loving in our service toward our fellow-men. We know that that is Christ's great mission among men. If there is somebody who has been cast adrift, some one clinging to a broken spar, with the waves of trouble and sin beating over his

head, Christ's sympathy is there, and our sympathy must be there, too, if Jesus is to be in the boat with us and pilot us. Around us are multitudes of men and women who are perishing in their sins. We can only have Christ's presence and Christ's peace in our hearts and in our Church by seeking to save these lost souls. God never gives us Mounts of Transfiguration but for the purpose of giving us power to go down into the valleys of sin and among the multitudes of devil-tormented men and women to rescue them. The Church must hold itself in readiness; it must be alert; it must not be afraid of new things nor of daring advancement. The disciples in their trouble were frightened when they first saw Jesus coming on the waves. But Jesus said: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." So we are sometimes afraid when Christ comes to us with opportunities and privileges. Christ is coming to these great downtown Churches in our large cities with opportunities for reaching careless and sinful men and women through aggressive evangelistic work. Brothers, sisters, we must not be above our business. We must not be too conservative, too dignified, to do the blessed work of throwing out the life-line to save the multitudes of lost men and women that throng these streets. Not only in the church itself, but in the street and in the business house, we must be ready to go with Jesus Christ to call men to salvation.

One night in summer, at the close of the service in a city church, Dr. Munhall, the evangelist, said to the people, "I 'm going out here on the street to

preach to the people who have not come to the church." Most of the congregation went with him and gathered round to sing before he spoke. Then he preached a brief sermon on "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." His voice was very clear, and there was a light wind blowing so as to carry it in one direction a long distance. Four or five times during the short sermon he repeated his text in a voice much louder than the rest of his discourse. Quite a distance away a rich banker was sitting out on his veranda alone. All at once, as coming from the sky, he heard distinctly, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He had not heard a note of the singing nor a word of the sermon, and so was startled upon hearing the text. He sprang to his feet and looked above him and around him, and for some minutes paced around his veranda, wondering where it came from. And so five times he heard it, until the Spirit of God fastened the message upon his conscience. He slept none that night. The next morning he spoke of it at the breakfast-table. His oldest son was present at the meeting the night before on the street, and told his father about it. The banker went to his business, but was so troubled that he sent his son to Dr. Munhall at the hotel to beg him to come to his bank and see him. When the preacher came in, the banker frankly said he wanted to be saved. Dr. Munhall opened to him the

way of salvation; and right there in his office, on a raised platform, where twenty clerks could see, the banker and the preacher knelt in prayer, and the man of business repented of his sins and gave his heart to Christ. Immediately upon rising from his knees, he stood up and clapped his hands to draw the attention of his astonished clerks and customers, and said: "I have just accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, and he accepts me. I am, therefore, a Christian, for which I praise God, and sincerely wish that all you who have not done so might do the same."

Dear friends, that is the work the Christian Church must do if Christ is to be with us and we are to share his presence and rejoice in his peace.

BX
8333
B3
M6

Banks, Louis Albert, 1855–1933.
The motherhood of God; a series of discourses by Louis Albert Banks ... Cincinnati, Jennings & Pye; New York, Eaton & Mains [1901]

1 p. l., 5–248 p. 19½ cm.

1. Methodist church—Sermons. I. Title.

BX8333.B3M6

333179

CCSC/rjn